THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

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THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

BY THE REV.
R. W. DALE, D.D., LL.D.

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PREFACE

THE Discourses published in this volume were delivered in Carrs Lane Chapel, Birmingham, on successive Sunday Evenings, at the close of 1870.

The practical illustrations of the eternal principles of morality which constitute the basis of the Decalogue, were suggested by the circumstances of the congregation, which contains very few professional men, not many manufacturers, but a large number of retail tradesmen, a large number of young men and women employed in retail shops, and a still larger number of working people.

It has always seemed to me to be a principal part of the work of a Christian Minister not only to insist on the duty of "repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," but to illustrate in detail the obligations both of private and public morality; and I have felt it right to discuss in the pulpit on Sunday, the questions affecting the moral life of indi-

viduals or of nations, which I knew were being discussed in workshops and at dinner tables during the week.

I have also endeavoured to encourage and strengthen the interest of my congregation in municipal and national politics. It has been justly said that in a free country, the public business of the nation is the private business of every citizen; and I cannot see that the will of God is ever likely to be done on earth as it is done in Heaven, if Christian men do not consider how the law of Christ is to be illustrated in the legislation and policy of the State.

BIRMINGHAM.

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INTRODUCTORY.

And God spake all these words, saying, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."—EXODUS xx. 1, 2.

MOST Evangelical Christians, I imagine, fail to appreciate the greatness of the contrast between the ancient revelation of God to the Jewish people and His revelation to ourselves through the Lord Jesus Christ. The law of Moses and the writings of the Prophets are bound up in one volume with the four Gospels and the writings of the Apostles, and many people forget that the Bible is not a single book but a Library. It is the habit of theologians to draw proofs of great Christian doctrines—often with a most unscientific want of discrimination—from the Jewish as well as from the Christian Scriptures. We have become so accustomed to trace the faint anticipations in the Old Testament of the glorious revelations in the New, that many of us seem to have the impression that the coming of Christ made very little difference either to the spiritual knowledge or to the spiritual life of mankind, and our Lord's declaration that the weakest and obscurest

Christian man, "the least in the Kingdom of Heaven," is greater than John the Baptist, although John was as great as the greatest of the Prophets, is almost unintelligible to us.

There are two opposite errors to be avoided; it is hard to say which is the more mischievous. To refuse to recognise in the Old Testament the record of a true, though elementary and imperfect revelation of God, is to lose a vast amount of most valuable religious teaching. To exalt the Old Testament to the level of the New, is to run the risk of misunderstanding both Moses and Christ; and this is the danger to which most Evangelical Christians in this country are exposed.

It will assist us to escape this danger if we remember constantly that the various books which have been brought together in the Bible, were written at different times, by different men, for different people, and with different purposes, and that the Divine revelations which they contain became gradually clearer and fuller. Above all, we should remember that the whole relationship between God and man has been changed by the Incarnation, and the coming of the Holy Ghost. The Apostles, we may be quite sure, were not disposed to undervalue the revelations which God had made to their fathers. Until they became followers of Christ, St. John, St. Peter, and St. Paul had been devout Jews. They had worship-

ped in the Temple, and listened to the exposition of Moses in the synagogue. From their childhood they had been taught to keep the ancient law. The atmosphere which they breathed was filled with the spirit of the Old Testament. Their religious faith had been formed, and their religious life developed by the history of the patriarchs, of the judges, of the kings of Israel and Judah, by the Psalms of David and the writings of the Prophets. Notwithstanding all the troubles which had come upon the Jewish people, it seemed to every one of the Apostles sufficient glory to belong to a race to which God had so wonderfully manifested Himself, and they would not have exchanged the great traditions and greater hopes of the descendants of Abraham, for all the power and splendour of Imperial Rome. And yet they all felt that through Christ they had passed into a new world. They had known Moses, David, and Isaiah before; but when they came to know Christ, they exclaimed, "the true light now shineth." What the ancient saints had only hoped for, they actually possessed. The Christian faith may be spoken of as, in some sense, the development of Judaism, but it was infinitely more than a development. To the Apostles who had been Jews themselves, old things had passed away, and all things had become new. The kingdom of heaven had at last been established upon earth,

and they knew that they had entered into it. They had been born again; they belonged to a new race, which had received a supernatural life; they had been made partakers of the Divine nature.

On the other hand they knew, and we should not forget, that God did not begin to reveal Himself in supernatural ways when Christ came. His government of the Jewish people, the miracles which He wrought when He delivered them from slavery in Egypt, the chastisements which he inflicted on them for their crimes, belong to the history of His relations to mankind. They reveal His character, and have, therefore, an indestructible interest.

In natural science, the investigation of the structure and laws of the higher types of organic life is greatly assisted by the investigation of the simpler organization of inferior types of life; and our knowledge of the richer and more complex revelation given to ourselves, may be assisted by considering the more rudimentary revelations which God made to the Jews.

It is not the custom of Nonconformists to paint the Ten Commandments on the walls of their churches. The practice would be most admirable if Christian congregations could be made to remember that these Commandments represent the claims of God, not on ourselves, but on a compara-

tively barbarous people; a people whose morality had been corrupted by habitual contact, for several generations, with the vices of a great heathen State, and whose religious thought had been degraded by its superstitions and idolatry; that to us to whom God has made far nobler revelations and manifested an infinitely greater love, He has given precepts requiring a far loftier perfection. If we fail to keep these ancient laws—laws so elementary, laws adapted to the human race in almost its lowest and weakest condition—how grievously must we fail to keep those higher laws which are the rule of our higher life, and by which we must at last be judged!

But these Commandments, as I have already reminded you, hold a conspicuous position in that prolonged revelation of Himself, of His Character, His Will, and His Relations to mankind, which God made to the Jewish people. They can, therefore, never become obsolete. The changing circumstances of the human race cannot destroy the significance and worth of any institutions or facts which reveal the life of God.

I. The Ten Commandments rest on the principle that God claims authority over the moral life of man. He claimed that authority in the earliest times; He claims it still. We all confess that God is the moral Ruler of our race, but the con-

fession is lightly made, and does not come from the depths of our moral and religious nature.

Our highest religious conceptions are moulded in part, by our commonest human experiences. Social and political influences largely determine the development both of religious thought and religious life. In this country there is hardly anything to remind most of us of the majesty and power of Law. We are never confronted by it. We never feel its pressure. It is an idea—not an irresistible Force before which we are compelled to bow. Still less are we disciplined to the conception of a supreme and august Authority—the Fountain of Law—an Authority, awful, stern, secure from all disturbance by the passions of common men, and infinitely beyond their judgment and control. We are always discussing the acts and policy of the highest personages in the State, striving to pass new laws and to get old laws amended. The most ancient and powerful institutions are no longer sacred. The reverence with which it is natural for the legislative assembly of a great country to be regarded by the mass of the people is hardly possible to a generation which has grown up amidst cries for Parliamentary Reform. Who can regard with veneration and awe an institution whose imperfections he has heard attacked on a hundred platforms, sometimes with bitter sarcasm, some-

times with indignation, sometimes with contemptuous ridicule, and which has reformed itself at last as the result of popular agitation? Royal princes have no political power, and when we see them, we find that they are young men who wear shooting jackets and smoke cigars like the rest of mankind. Prime Ministers write novels and articles in popular magazines. There is nothing in our political life to develope the spirit of reverence and the habit of submission to authority.

Even in the Family there is reason to fear that the old traditions which invested parents with the right to govern their children, and made Obedience the capital virtue of childhood, have begun to disappear. There was a theory promulgated early in this century which taught that a child's own conscience and reason should be regarded as the sufficient rule of his conduct, and that a parent of forty should never require a baby of four to do anything which the baby itself did not recognise as expedient and right. I doubt whether anybody was ever foolish enough to try how the theory would work, but it is certain that there is a general indisposition, or inability, to assert and maintain parental power. The early age at which the children of working people, in most manufacturing towns, are able to earn considerable wages, encourages a spirit of rude independence and insub-

ordination. Prosperous tradesmen and manufacturers generally try to give to their children a better education than they received themselves, and their children, in the conceit of their superficial acquirements, often treat their fathers and mothers with contempt.

This social disorganization produces disastrous results on our religious life. We are not trained to obedience and reverence, and the conception of God's *Authority* appears to have no real and effective hold on the intellect and heart even of religious men. From our thoughts of God, the recognition of Him as the Moral Governor of our race is almost excluded. God built the world to be our home, and furnished it with comfort and luxury. He ripens our corn and fruit. By day He defends us from harm while we are at work, and at night He watches over us while we sleep. In times of trouble and fear we entreat Him to deliver us, or to give us consolation and strength. We have been taught to think of the universe chiefly in its relation to ourselves; and while the ancient Psalmist exclaimed, "The heavens declare Thy glory, and the firmament showeth Thy handiwork," it is our habit to dwell upon the prodigality with which God has provided for the life and happiness of mankind. We think of God rather as our servant than our governor. Even in our theology—in our orthodox Evangelical theology—

God's authority has no adequate place. What Fichte said of the religious temper of Germany at the beginning of this century, is true of the religious temper of very many of ourselves; our real conviction is that "the only necessity for a God is that He may look after our interests."

These Commandments recall to us the better faith of earlier times. It is not God's highest function to maintain the order of the material universe, to provide for the physical wants of His creatures, for their ease, safety, and happiness. It belongs to Him to assert and vindicate the universal authority of the eternal law of righteousness. He has therefore given laws which it is the supreme duty of all His moral creatures to obey. These laws are not arbitrary, but in relation to us they are absolute. Righteousness is not right because He commands it; but everything that He commands is right. Sin is not sinful because he forbids it; but everything that He forbids is sinful. Whatever sanctity, whatever majesty, belongs to the eternal law of righteousness, belongs to Him. Of that law, His will is the perfect expression. Only in thought can we separate the moral law from God Himself, of whose throne it is the strong foundation, and in whose nature and acts it is perfectly and gloriously illustrated. All the obligations which rest upon us to do right, oblige us to obey Him.

But it may be asked, does not Conscience render definite Divine precepts unnecessary? Is there not an inner voice, which to every man is absolutely supreme; and an inner light, in which every man is bound to walk? What have I to do with outward commandments, if I have a direct intuition of the eternal law itself?

There is one very obvious reply to this objection to the external revelation of moral law. Men do not come into the world with a clear and perfect intuition of all moral obligations; and it would be utterly anomalous if the moral faculty alone, of all the powers of our nature, were developed solely from within, and could achieve its perfection independently of all external conditions. Those of us who have the deepest reverence for the human conscience, are constantly trying to develope it by appeals and discipline addressed to man's moral nature from without. The whole work of moralists, preachers, and reformers, rests on the hypothesis that although men have a faculty for recognising what is right, the faculty requires training and cultivation. Parents authoritatively tell their children that they must not lie or steal. They inflict chastisement for the vices of childhood. Parental commands and parental discipline are of the nature of an external revelation of moral law. We may acknowledge this at least—that the commandments of God are among the

agencies by which the moral faculty is educated and perfected.

It must further be remembered that the moral development of the race has been seriously disturbed by sin. Our very conception of Duty is obscured and degraded. It is only the virtuous man who knows what is virtuous. We must obey the moral law to have a true apprehension of it. To perfect light a perfect life is necessary. Supernatural revelation assists man to recover the lost ideal of moral perfection, and that ideal ceases to be supernatural—in the sense of resting for its authority upon any external proofs that it came from God—exactly as we more nearly approach it. What was a mere parental law to a child of ten, comes, through the child's obedience to it, to shine in its own light, and to carry with it its own authority by the time the child is fifteen; and in the same way, laws which, at first, good men tried to obey, only because God gave them, are at last seen to be so right that if His direct and supernatural sanction were obscured they would be still obeyed.

But the complete reply to this objection lies in the fact that we do not know God truly unless we know Him as our moral ruler. This Divine relationship we are in constant danger of ignoring. We prefer, in every province of our life, abstract law to the living God. Such commandments as

these are intended, not merely to train the conscience to a higher conception of righteousness, but to reveal to us that in doing right we are obeying the holy will of a personal God, and that in doing wrong we are disobeying Him. Our unwillingness to receive an external revelation of moral laws arises partly from this: that we resent the authority of a will which claims to be above our own, even though that will is the will of God. We can endure the supremacy of an ideal law, but not of a person. But there can be no true worship of God until His moral authority is acknowledged. The confession that He has a right to command us, that it is His function to control and direct our moral life, lies very near the root of a true relationship between ourselves and Him.

II. There can be no doubt that God intended that these Commandments should be kept. This may seem to be a very unnecessary observation; but it is my conviction that there are many religious people who have quite a different theory from this about the intention of Divine laws. They suppose that the Commandments of God are principally intended to bring us to a sense of our guilt, and to suggest to us the sins for which we have to ask God's forgiveness. The thought of actually obeying them, and obeying them perfectly, scarcely ever occurs to them.

That the laws given to the Jewish nation at Sinai, were really meant to rule their life is indisputable; the people were not to worship false gods; they were not to make any graven image of the true God; they were not to work on the Sabbath; they were not to commit adultery or murder. The Commandments required obedience, not merely repentance for disobedience. God has ended as He began. The laws of the New Testament, like the laws of the Old, are given to be obeyed. "If any man love Me, He will keep My words;" some persons seem to suppose that it is enough if we are sorry that we cannot keep them.

III. These Commandments deal chiefly with actions, not with mere thought or emotion. Man is not a pure intellect or a disembodied passion. God's laws, therefore, which deal with man as he is, take large account of his external conduct. It is true that one of the characteristic elements of the teaching of Christ consists in the energy and emphasis with which it insists on the wise government of the thoughts, and a right condition of the heart; but the tendency which has revealed itself, more than once, in the evil times of the Church, to separate inward perfection from outward practice, and to declare that for the spiritual man all external actions are indifferent, is destructive alike of morality and religion. That tendency in its

wilder and more profligate results is altogether suppressed among ourselves, but I am not quite sure whether its subtle influence may not be detected in all Evangelical Churches. Evangelical Christians rather resent sermons on the moral virtues, and greatly prefer to be preached to about the spiritual affections. They know that they must watch against sins of the heart, but appear to imagine that the outward conduct may be left to look after itself. There are, I believe, many good people who when they are betrayed by a hasty temper into speaking harshly, unjustly, and cruelly, are very much more troubled about the sinfulness of their "state of mind," than about the wickedness of their words. They seem to suppose that our external conduct is an outlying province over which God does not much care about exercising any strong control; that in claiming authority over the heart He has implicitly surrendered His authority over the outward life. The laws which affect our words and actions belong to the sphere of what they call "mere morality," with which they have a secret feeling that spiritual men have no great concern. They forget that the nature of man is an organic unity. His actions are as truly part of his life as his thoughts and passions, his faith or his unbelief his sorrow for sin, and his joy in the infinite love of God. Lust is a crime as well as adultery; but

our Lord did not teach that the act is indifferent, and that only the passion is criminal. He did not repeal any outward law when he required purity of heart and inward righteousness; the new Commandment was an addition to the old, perfecting not repealing it.

IV. Before God gave these Commandments to the Jewish people, He wrought a magnificent series of miracles to effect their emancipation from miserable slavery, and to punish their oppressors. He first made them free and then gave them the law.

I do not say that this is a type of God's method of dealing with ourselves, because to very many minds a Jewish type suggests a merely artificial and mechanical anticipation of a Christian fact. But it is a type in the true and noble sense of the word. God always acts like Himself. The principles of His government of mankind are unchanging; if they changed, these old Jewish histories would have long ago become worthless. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

It might not have been absolutely impossible for the Jews to have kept these commandments even in Egypt, but the difficulties would have been almost invincible. The people were in no condition to receive a Divine revelation. Oppression had broken their spirit, and crushed all

the nobler elements of their nature. In the atmosphere which they breathed, purity and virtue could hardly live. They had been degraded by the heathenism, and by the vices, as well as by the severity of their masters. It was impossible for such a race as the Jews seem to have been at this period of their history to have any vigorous faith in the greatness of the God who had revealed Himself to their fathers. The wealth, the glory, the power of the world belonged to the Egyptians ; contempt and wretchedness to the descendants of Abraham and the heirs of the promises. The God of their fathers was either not strong enough to defend them from intolerable evils, or else was indifferent to their distresses.

God did not begin by commanding them to acknowledge His greatness and authority, and to show fidelity to Himself, and to break at once with the vices to which their external condition almost bound them as with fetters of iron. He began by manifesting His greatness in acts which must have appealed most powerfully to their imagination, and made even their passions—which seem to have been almost the only elements of energy left in them—take the side of faith in Himself. There was the wild exultation of satisfied revenge in thousands of Jewish hearts, as terror after terror descended upon the mighty race which had wronged them. Why He had slumbered so long

they could not tell, but He had awoke at last, and the basest among them was prepared to listen to a God whose thunders and lightnings, and destroying angel, had brought ruin and destruction on their enemies—tears, and agony, and death, into the proudest palaces of Egypt.

He led them across the sea into the vast solitudes of the desert, and when they were alone with Himself, separated for ever from the idols and temples of Egypt, from its superstitions and vices, He gave them these Commandments. Is not this the way in which He deals with us all? His Gospel comes to us even before His law. Our whole life rests on the supreme manifestation of His love. If He asks us for an impossible perfection, it is only that He may lead us to the great discovery that the ideal of human holiness is beyond our reach even in its first elements, until He has redeemed us from the world and from ourselves, given us His own life and made us one with Himself in Christ. "This is the work of God"—the earliest work, the great work—that we receive His love and His law together in Jesus Christ our Lord. He gives us freedom before He tells us to be free.

It is more than three thousand years since these laws were given to the Jews, and a new period began in the history of God's relations to our race.

Through all these centuries God has been incessantly struggling with our sin and the sin of our fathers. In that struggle, which reached its critical moment in the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, lies for us the great interest of the universe, for it reveals, as nothing else has revealed, the very mystery and glory of the life of God. Not in the pleasant sunshine, or in the distant stars, or in the beauty of flowers, or in the yellow wealth of the harvest, or in the music of winds and streams, or in the majesty of mountains, or in the peace of silent valleys hidden among the hills, is God's love for mankind most perfectly revealed ; but in the sternness and in the generosity, the anger and the mercy, with which He has striven to win or to terrify us from sin, and to discipline us to perfection. Three thousand years have gone, and He fainteth not, neither is He weary, although even He might long to be released from the burden of the folly, the madness, the perversity, the ingratitude of our race. It is wonderful how His love clings to us. *We* grow impatient if we do not succeed in reclaiming the vicious by a few months' intermittent effort. If at the end of a few years a good work achieves no success, we are ready to abandon it. But God loves us too well to abandon us, even though our recovery from evil seems so slow at the best, and sometimes appears to make no progress at all.

His great end is our perfection. For that end He has permitted the sharpest troubles to come upon individual men, and appalling calamities, famine, plague, anarchy, and war, to come upon nations. Our present happiness is to Him of subordinate importance. It was to secure human perfection that prophets received their inspiration, and that God Himself was manifest in the flesh. Nothing can satisfy Him but this; and between us and Him no true reconciliation is possible till we accept His great end as ours, and believe in our very hearts that apart from our restoration to the image of God there can be no true blessedness and no enduring glory.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."—EXODUS xx. 2, 3.

THE first Commandment is not a formal declaration of the truth that there is but one God. This truth is formally asserted in several well-known passages in Deuteronomy, but it cannot be maintained that the Commandment which forbids the Jewish people to serve and worship any other god than the God who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, required them to deny that other divinities exist. It may be said very fairly that the Commandment is consistent with the theory that every nation has its own god, on whose protection it can rely, and whose greatness it should honour. Jehovah was the national God of the Jews, and therefore the Commandment insists on His exclusive right to their service. Other races might worship other gods; the Jews were bound to serve Him.

The absence in these fundamental laws of any dogmatic assertion that there is but one God, is a striking illustration of a principle which has de-

termined the whole method of God's revelation of Himself to our race. We are so made that great spiritual truths must be rooted in the life before they can be clearly apprehended by the intellect. In a sense, they must be believed before they can be known. The moral and spiritual nature of man must be formed and disciplined by Laws and Facts, in which the truth to be revealed is present, before that truth can become an abstract proposition and find its place in the creed.

The Commandment does not tell the Jew that the gods worshipped by other nations have no existence; it tells him that he must offer them no homage, and that from him they must receive no recognition of their authority and power. The Jew must serve Jehovah, and Jehovah alone. This was the truest method of securing the ultimate triumph of Monotheism. If I withhold my service from any god, if I observe no ceremonies in his honour, if I never worship in his temples, if I abstain from any acknowledgment of his divine claims, he soon ceases to be a god to me. A religious dogma, true or false, perishes if it is not rooted in the religious affections and sustained by religious observances. Had the Jew faithfully kept the First Commandment, and refused to worship the idols of surrounding nations, Monotheistic faith would have been secured by Monotheistic practice.

I have said that it is a law of our nature, regulating by the whole history of Divine revelation, that great spiritual truths must be rooted in the life before they can be clearly and firmly apprehended by the intellect. This law is strikingly illustrated in the revelation of the Divinity of Christ. There are passages enough in the four Gospels to show that our Lord claimed for Himself a mysterious unity with the Father. Peter's confession is the proof that there were times at least when the Apostles recognised Him as the Son of the living God. But those who believed in Christ really adored Him before they had any definite perception of the truth that He was God manifest in the flesh. The creed of the intellect followed the reverence and trust of the heart. He had become their God before they had any clear apprehension that He was Divine. Nor did the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity, as articulately developed by the early Church, derive its chief support from the innumerable texts which can be alleged in its favour by controversial theologians. It was the logical expression of the Christian life. Such love was claimed for Christ and inspired by Him, all Christian men were conscious that their dependence upon Him was so absolute, the authority which He asserted and exercised over their whole spiritual nature was so august, the blessings which they received from Him were so infinite, that,

apart from definite texts, it was impossible not to confess that He was God.

The same principle is illustrated in the development of moral truth. Men hated and condemned falsehood before they arrived at the ethical dogma that falsehood is a vice. Their hearts were thrilled with the beauty and nobleness of generosity and self-sacrifice before they organised a moral theory which gives to these great virtues a place of honour. It is not in the region of the intellect that great moral and spiritual truths first assert their authority. They govern the moral and spiritual life of men before the intellect defines them.

But although the First Commandment does not declare that there is but one God, the whole system of Judaism rests on that sublime truth; and what the Jewish people had witnessed during the great controversy between Moses and Pharaoh in Egypt, and since their escape from slavery, must have done more to destroy their superstitious reverence for the gods of their old masters than could have been effected by any dogmatic declaration that the gods of the nations are idols. The sacred river and the sacred soil of Egypt, its cattle and its people, had all been smitten by Jehovah's supernatural power. There had been storms of hail and of thunder. The light of heaven had been darkened. The sea had listened

to the voice of their prophet and chief. The root of Egyptian idolatry was Pantheism, and in these demonstrations of Jehovah's dominion over all the provinces of nature, the people of Israel must have recognised, if not a direct proof of the non-existence of the Egyptian deities, at least a proof of their weakness in the presence of their own God. It is through the imagination and the passions that idolatrous superstitions exert their fatal power over mankind. The traditions which an imperfectly civilised people have inherited from their fathers, the terrors which have haunted them from their childhood, are not to be dislodged by a bare dogmatic statement of truth. The magnificent and terrible miracles which avenged the wrongs of the Jewish people and accomplished their deliverance, were a great appeal both to their passions and their imagination against idolatry.

Moreover, the very roots of idolatry were destroyed by that representation of the origin of the Universe, which had been transmitted to them from their ancestors, and which was subsequently placed at the beginning of the Book which contained the history of their race. The first chapter of the Book of Genesis looks like a fragment of ancient tradition, which Moses found ready to his hand. It is a Psalm rather than a history; a religious creed rather than a scientific theory. Most of the criticisms to which it has been subjected,

and most of the attempts to vindicate its authority and value, rest on a misconception of its character and purpose. It is the earliest and one of the noblest expressions of that Faith through which "we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." To whom the original revelation of God's true relationship to the Universe was made, who it was that expressed that relationship with such majestic and sublime simplicity, we cannot tell. There can, however, be little doubt that the first chapter of Genesis, very much in the form in which we have it now, had been received by Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, from still more ancient patriarchs, and that it had been preserved among their descendants through all the humiliation and misery of their bondage to the Egyptians. To the people generally, the wonderful tradition may have been most imperfectly known, but when the great prophet came to them in the name of Jehovah, and led them away into the wilderness, and gave them the laws which God required them to obey, we can easily imagine that it would rapidly spread, and that it soon became known to the whole nation.

This tradition destroys the most common forms of ancient idolatry. It declares that the sun, the moon, and the stars are not Divine: they are simply the creatures of God. The light is not Divine:

it began to shine at God's command. "The sea is His, and He made it, and His hands formed the dry land." All forms of life came into existence in obedience to His word. He is separate from the Universe, and is not to be identified with it. It may be a vesture in which He has clothed Himself, but He is personally distinct from it. The beauty and the majesty and the terror of visible things are not the necessary manifestations of an infinite and eternal and impersonal Power: "He commanded, and they were created:" "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth:" "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."

And so these obscure and half-civilised tribes, without intellectual culture, ignorant of science, undisciplined by philosophy, fugitives from an oppressive and degrading tyranny, became the trustees of the great Truth which has changed the intellectual and moral life as well as the religious faith of mankind.

How do you account for this?

M. Renan suggests that the Jews "would never have arrived at the dogma of the Divine Unity if they had not found it in the most imperious instincts of their mind and heart." He says further, "The desert is Monotheistic."

There is no easier method of disposing of innu-

merable historical difficulties than to pronounce the mystic word "Race." No doubt there is very much in blood. Whatever it was which originally determined the characteristic qualities of the great families of mankind, has played a great part in the intellectual and moral development of nations. But that "Race" should be alleged in explanation of the Monotheistic faith of the Jewish people, implies, to speak moderately, a singular audacity and eccentricity of genius. For centuries "the most imperious instincts of the mind and heart" of the descendants of Abraham betrayed them again and again into the grossest and most licentious forms of Polytheism. It seemed impossible to cure them of their fatal tendency to worship whatever gods were worshipped by any other people. Their whole national organisation was intended to restrain them from idolatry, and yet they were idolaters. They believed that their worst national sufferings were the punishments of idolatry, and they continued idolaters still. All their greatest men, their poets, their orators, their most glorious warriors, the heroes of the popular imagination, struggled in vain against the "imperious instincts" which drove the mass of the people to celebrate strange and forbidden rites in groves and on hills in honour of foreign divinities. Their laws made idolatry a capital crime; but the laws were powerless. Their patriotism, all their national traditions, should have

made them faithful to the One God, and yet they were faithless. It was not till they had suffered a long succession of national calamities, and been exiles from their own land for two generations, that "the most imperious instincts" of this perverse race were at last subdued, and Monotheism won its final victory. As for the theory that "the desert is Monotheistic," the whole nation had been living in the desert for I know not how many years when they had to be punished with pestilence for worshipping the gods of the Moabites.

M. Comte has attempted to explain the transition of all the civilised races of the West from Polytheism to Monotheism—a revolution which he describes as the greatest through which the human race could pass until the hour arrived for the triumph of Positivism, of which he himself is the philosopher and prophet—by ascribing it partly to the influence of Grecian thought, and partly to the influence of Roman conquests and Roman Imperialism. In Greece he alleges that the growing appreciation of the unity and uniformity of nature, the recognition of a Supreme Fate to whose blind but irresistible power the very gods were subject, and the development of metaphysical speculation, gradually undermined the foundations of Polytheism. The victories of the Roman arms and the splendid unity of the Imperial Government, by destroying the political

and social independence of the vanquished nations, swept away national religions and rendered it inevitable that there should be a general consent to one religious creed, and the acceptance of a common Morality.

Whether this explanation accounts satisfactorily for the development of Monotheism in modern Europe would lead us into a discussion lying very remote from our immediate subject; clearly no similar explanation can be given of the Monotheism of the Mosaic institutions. This was too obvious to escape the consideration of M. Comte. In a curious note he suggests the astounding hypothesis that Judaism may have sprung from an attempt of the sacerdotal caste among the Egyptians, and perhaps among the Chaldeans, to establish a colony in which they hoped to secure a perfect ascendancy of the sacerdotal over the military power, and a possible asylum for themselves in times of danger and disaster. The Exodus, in that case, must be regarded as the carrying out of a scheme arranged by Egyptian priests, who made use of an enslaved and half-barbarous race to found a colony for the defence of a purer and nobler Faith than their civilised rulers could be persuaded to receive. A greater contrast than exists between the Pantheism of the profounder tendencies of the religion of Egypt and the intense personality of the God

of the Jews, or between Egyptian Polytheism and the severity of Jewish Monotheism, it is impossible to conceive. M. Comte's theory is not only destitute of all historical support; as a pure hypothesis, it is absolutely grotesque. But even if it were true, he would still have to account for the Monotheistic Faith of these Egyptian and Chaldean priests from whom Moses and the prophets received their original inspiration. How was it that they anticipated by two thousand years the orderly development of the intellect of the race? M. Comte thinks that in the very midst of a theocracy based on Polytheism, some distinguished men may have had a certain intellectual tendency to Monotheism and "a kind of instinctive predilection" for it. This is an arbitrary fancy which is hardly consistent with the rigorously scientific method of the Positive Philosophy. In attempting to evade the supernatural origin of Judaism, the keen penetration and remarkable sagacity which M. Comte often displays quite forsook him.

The historical preface to the Commandment, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," has great significance. To the Jews, Jehovah was not a mere idea or a system of attributes. They did not think of Him as the

Necessary Cause of the Universe, or as a Being inaccessible to human knowledge, but Whom it was their duty to invest with whatever perfections could exalt and glorify Him—infinite Wisdom, infinite Power, awful Righteousness, inflexible Truth, the tenderest Love. It never occurred to them to suppose that they had to *think out* a God for themselves any more than it occurred to them that they had to *think out* a King of Egypt. They knew Pharaoh as a tyrannical sovereign from whom they had suffered intolerable oppression, and who had been drowned for his crimes in the Red Sea. They knew Jehovah as the God who had held back the waves like a wall while they fled across the sea to escape the vengeance of their enemies; they knew Him as the God who had sent thunder, and lightning, and hail, plagues on cattle, and plagues on men, to punish the Egyptians and to compel them to let the children of Israel go; they knew Him as the God whose angel had slain the first-born of their oppressors, and filled the land from end to end with death, and agony, and terror. He was the same God, so Moses and Aaron told them, who by visions and voices, in promises and precepts, had revealed Himself long before to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We learn what men are from what they say and what they do. A biography of Luther gives us a more vivid and trustworthy

knowledge of the man than the most philosophical essay on his character and creed. The story of his imprisonment and of his journey to Worms, his Letters, his Sermons, and his Table Talk, are worth more than the most elaborate speculations about him. The Jews learnt what God is, not from theological dissertations on the Divine attributes but from the facts of a Divine history. They knew Him for themselves in His own acts and in His own words.

If these ancient Jewish books contained nothing more than a systematic account of the religious ideas of Moses and the patriarchs, a representation of what they thought they had discovered concerning the God in whom they lived and moved and had their being, the books would have great speculative interest, but for the purposes of the religious life they would have become obsolete. They have an imperishable value because they contain the record of how God dealt with good and with bad men, with individuals and with nations. Had they contained nothing more than a series of truths expressed in the form of definite propositions, which had been supernaturally revealed to the ancestors of the Jewish race, they would have been infinitely less precious. The measure in which Truth can be revealed to men is necessarily determined by the limits of their moral and spiritual development, and by their

intellectual capacity. It is affected by the resources of language. But Divine acts are subject to no such limitations. They contain more than can ever be stated in the propositions of dogmatic theology. They are inexhaustible fountains of Truth. Every new age finds new significance in them. The same sun and the same stars are shining above us now that shone upon the plains of Chaldea two thousand years ago, but even Newton and Laplace have not exhausted astronomical discovery. And so the great acts of God in the early centuries of human history not only reveal more to us than they revealed to the men who were immediately affected by them—what they reveal transcends all the limits of human theological systems. We can no more exhaust the truth contained in the history of God's acts than we can exhaust the truth contained in the phenomena of creation. The history is a perpetual revelation, as new and fresh to-day as when it was first written.

This Commandment may appear to have no direct practical value for ourselves. Few of us have ever seen an idol except in a Museum. There is not one of us who is in any danger of worshipping an idol. It would be a perversion of the obvious intention of the Commandment if I were to denounce covetousness, social ambition, or excessive love of children. It is quite legiti-

mate to speak of men worshipping wealth or social distinction, and mothers may be very properly warned against making children their idols. But, after all, these sins are not the sins which this Commandment was meant to forbid. Children are not "gods" in the sense in which the word is used here. Covetousness is idolatry; but it is not the idolatry which, among the Jews, was to be punished with death. Divine acts have an infinite meaning, but Divine words must be interpreted according to the common usages of language.

It must be admitted that there is no reason why God should say to any of us, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." The sin which is our supreme shame is not the sin against which this law warned the Jewish race. Our religious condition, or the religious condition of very many of us, has sunk below the level which the first Commandment was intended to reach. Jehovah said to the Jew, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." If He were to speak to many of us, it would be necessary to condemn us for having no God at all.

We confess in our creed His majesty and greatness as the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, of angels and of men, but the confession is a tradition, not the expression of a real and living faith. There is no devout awe in His presence. His glory does not subdue us to wonder and fear.

When we are professing to worship Him our hearts are not hushed with reverence, and there is no fire or rapture in our praise. When we sin grossly we are stung with self-reproach and humiliated by the loss of self-respect, but we do not fear His anger. The hope of winning His approbation is not an active and energetic motive to doing right. Are not many of us conscious that if we lost God from our creed no element of joy or terror would be lost to our life? Would not the whole current of thought and passion run in its old channels? Would not our sorrows be the same, our hopes and our fears? Would not the sunlight and the darkness be the same as before? The appalling truth is, that many of us have sunk into Atheism.

The vast majority of mankind have built temples to false gods and worshipped them. Civilised nations and barbarous races have been guilty of the same folly and the same crime. We have escaped from the superstitions by which our fathers were enslaved, and by which millions of men in other lands are enslaved still. The dread and the delight with which idolaters bow before the forms of their gods provoke our pity or our contempt. But that dread and that delight are the signs that the religious life, though corrupted and degraded, still exists. Where are the signs that it exists in us? Among those who worship

false gods there is still a passionate desire for the presence and help of a superhuman Power, and for communion with the Divine. With many of us, the last sign of our consciousness that we are akin to a higher form of existence, and that we were made for a greater intercourse than that which we hold with our fellow men, has passed away.

What right have we to regard ourselves as better men, in relation to God, than the savage who clings to his Fetish, or the civilised idolater who enriches the temples which he erects to grim and terrible divinities, with marbles, and gold, and pearls, and precious stones? They have forsaken the true God, and so have we. In them some of the instincts and emotions which should be stirred by God's transcendent holiness and infinite love are still energetic and intense; in us they have perished altogether.

We and they are brethren in sin. Account for it how we may, the whole development of humanity is corrupted. Our strange reluctance to have to do with God is not an accident. It is not an exceptional and surprising perversity. It must come from some deep and mysterious cause which is beyond the reach of all the external circumstances which affect the civilisation, the intellectual progress, and even the morality of nations. We shrink from contact with God. Yet He loves us. But even His love would be unavailing

if He did not inspire with a new and supernatural life those who are filled with shame and sorrow by the discovery of their estrangement from Him; in the power of that life we may pass out of the world which is separated from God, into the Kingdom of Heaven, and even while the imperfections of our mortal condition are still upon us, may find in God's presence fulness of joy, and at His right hand pleasures for evermore.

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My Commandments."—EXODUS xx. 4, 5.

THE First Commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me," is sustained neither by a penalty nor a promise. The second is invested with special solemnity—first, by the threat that those who are guilty of disobedience will provoke God's anger and bring down His chastisements on themselves and on their children to the third and fourth generation,—and, secondly, by the declaration that God's mercy will be shown through thousands of generations to the descendants of the men who love Him and keep His Commandments.

Considerable authority may be alleged on behalf of the opinion that the Commandment absolutely forbids painting and sculpture, and this view

derives some support from the apparent absence of any considerable development of these arts among the Jewish people. They were poets, orators, and musicians, but they were not painters or sculptors. But, after carefully considering what has been urged in support of this opinion, I see no adequate reason for abandoning the more common and almost universal conviction, that the Commandment simply forbids the carving of images and the painting of pictures with the intention of making them the objects of religious reverence.

The Second Commandment condemns a very different sin from that which is condemned in the first. The first condemns the worshipping of false gods; the second condemns the making of any image or symbol even of the true God.

It would have been very natural for the Jews to have done this. They had traditions of many Divine revelations which had been made to their ancestors. It would not have been surprising if they had translated into stone their conception of the angels who appeared to Abraham and told him of the approaching destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, or if they had given visible expression to their imagination of the august Form that appeared above the ladder which Jacob saw in his dream, and from whose lips came the promise that the land on which the patriarch was lying should some day belong to his descendants. Still more natural

would it have been for them to represent in symbols the great and irresistible power which Jehovah had recently manifested in the plagues with which He had visited Egypt. He had shown Himself to be the God of Thunder and of Hail; the God of Light and of Darkness; the God of the Sea which had listened to the voice of His prophet, had let His people pass through it in safety, and had then utterly destroyed their enemies. Without the slightest intention of withdrawing their homage from Jehovah, with the intention of manifesting the wonder and gratitude and reverence with which they regarded Him, they might have attempted to perpetuate in a visible and permanent form—in stone, in silver, and in gold—the impressions which His supernatural acts had made upon their imagination and their heart.

They actually did it.

Hardly had the thunders, which accompanied the giving of the Law, ceased, when Aaron himself yielded to the irrepressible craving of the people for a visible symbol of Jehovah. The golden calf was not intended to represent any false God, any deity worshipped by heathen races, but Jehovah Himself. It was the symbol of the God—so Aaron told them—who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. The festival in its honour was a festival to Jehovah. But the crime was punished by the destruction of three thousand men. Several cen-

turies later, Jeroboam and the tribes which followed him in his revolt against Rehoboam, repeated the offence. The calves of gold, which were set up at Dan and at Bethel, did not represent any other god than the God who was worshipped at Jerusalem. The king did not venture to ask his people to do homage to any strange divinity. He feared the political effect of their going up to Jerusalem, the capital of the rival kingdom, at the annual feasts; he therefore instituted a feast at Dan and at Bethel in imitation of the feast of tabernacles, and in honour of the God that brought them out of the land of Egypt. The golden calves represented the God of their fathers. This was a very different crime from that which was committed by Ahab, his successor; for "Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. And it came to pass, *as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam*, the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians, and *went and served Baal and worshipped him. And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.* And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him." Jeroboam made an image of the true God, and so broke the Second Commandment; Ahab broke the First Commandment,

by turning aside the nation to worship Baal, one of the gods of the heathen.

There is very much to be said in defence of the sin which this Commandment forbids. No one, it may be alleged, supposes that the figure of wood or stone, or gold, is the real God. It is regarded as being only the symbol of an unseen and awful or gracious or glorious Presence to which the worship is actually offered. The visible form makes the invisible God more real. Further, it may be asked whether even those who reject material representations of God do not form for themselves an intellectual image of Him and worship Him by means of that? What essential difference is there between worshipping God under the symbol of a material image and worshipping Him under the symbol of an intellectual conception? In both cases the representation is remote from the truth of the Divine greatness and glory; in both cases it is our own work, in one case the work of our hands, in the other case the work of our intellect.

But as it is a religious offence to make "any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth," for the purpose of worshipping it as a symbol of the unseen and eternal God; it is also a religious offence to

worship any representation of Him which we have constructed by logic or imaged in fancy.

God wished to be thought of by the Jews as He had revealed Himself in His words and acts. They were not to make a god for themselves, but to worship Him who had made Himself known as the Creator of the Heavens and of the Earth, as the God who had given promises to their fathers which He was now about to fulfil, as the God who by stupendous miracles had redeemed them from slavery, and was now forming them into a free nation. Throughout their history He sent them—not painters or sculptors—but prophets who were perpetually illustrating the infinite significance of the great historical and personal manifestations of Jehovah in previous centuries, and confirming the hope of the nation in the certainty of other Divine acts in the future which would accomplish a far more perfect redemption than that from Egyptian bondage, and confer nobler blessings than the "milk and honey" of the Land of Promise. His Tent standing among their tents in the wilderness, His Palace standing among their palaces in Jerusalem, gave them a vivid impression that His home was among them, and that He was a God nigh at hand, and not afar off, but He did not permit His eternal majesty to be represented by any visible form. He was to be thought of as He had made Himself known in the vengeance which He in-

flicted on their enemies, in the chastisements which He inflicted on themselves when they sinned, and in the peace, security, and plenty which He conferred upon them when they kept His laws.

The fundamental principle of this Commandment has authority for us still. The whole history of Christendom is a demonstration of the peril and ruin which come from any attempt to supplement by Art and by stately and impressive Rites, the revelation which God has made of Himself in Christ, and which He is making continually to all devout souls by the illumination of the Holy Ghost.

There are many forms in which the principle of this Commandment can be violated. Take the simplest and most obvious illustration. It cannot be denied that the image of our Lord Jesus Christ in His dying agony, with His hands and feet nailed to the cross, the crown of thorns on His brow, and His face lined with suffering, may produce a very powerful impression on the imagination and the heart. There are some who find in the strength of that impression a sufficient justification for the devotional use of the crucifix. They say that no Catholic imagines that the crucifix is Christ. The visible form does but call up the emotions which should be created by the sorrows and anguish in which the Divine love was revealed, and by which the sin of the world was

atoned for. It makes the great sacrifice for human salvation more intensely real and vivid.

But precisely the same argument might have been alleged in defence of the golden calf by which Aaron satisfied the craving of the Jews for a visible representation of Jehovah. No one supposed that it was the calf itself which had smitten the Egyptians with plagues and divided the Red Sea. It was but a symbol of the invisible God. The people exulted when they saw it; they feasted; they sang; they danced; their shout was like the shout of battle. But their crime made the wrath of God "wax hot" against them, and in His anger He threatened to consume them.

Inevitably, by laws of association which we cannot control, whatever is habitually associated with the creation of religious emotion comes to be invested with an artificial sacredness. You may say that you know that the crucifix is not Christ; but, if, when you see the crucifix it calls up the emotions which would be called up by the vision of Christ Himself, though to the intellect it is only a material image, to the heart it is rapidly becoming something more.

In my college days I had an engraving of our Lord hanging over my mantelpiece. The calmness, the dignity, the gentleness, and the sadness of the face represented the highest conceptions which I had in those days of the human presence.

of Christ. I often looked at it, and seldom without being touched by it. I discovered in the course of a few months that the superstitious sentiments were gradually clustering about it, which are always created by the visible representations of the Divine. The engraving was becoming to me the shrine of God manifest in the flesh, and I understood the growth of idolatry. The visible symbol is at first a symbol and nothing more; it assists thought; it stirs passion. At last it is identified with the God whom it represents. If, every day I bow before a crucifix in prayer, if I, address it as though it were Christ, though I know it is not, I shall come to feel for it a reverence and love which are of the very essence of idolatry.

There are objections of another kind to this prostration of the soul before the image of the dying Christ. It makes our worship and our prayer unreal. We are adoring a Christ who does not exist. He is not on the cross now, but on the throne. His agonies are past for ever. He has risen from the dead. He is at the right hand of God. If we pray to a dying Christ, we are praying not to Christ Himself, but to a mere remembrance of Him. The injury which the crucifix has inflicted on the religious life of Christendom, in encouraging a morbid and unreal devotion, is absolutely incalculable. It has given us a dying Christ instead of a living Christ, a

Christ separated from us by many centuries instead of a Christ nigh at hand.

We Protestants, if we do not protest against the crucifix with all the vehemence with which our fathers protested, still protest; but for the cross we seem to have toleration. I see golden crosses on your hymn books; crimson crosses on your Bibles; little wooden crosses on your mantelpieces and your drawing-room tables; golden crosses on men's watch chains; and crosses of jet hanging from ladies' necks. Now of this Romanising trifling, I have to say that no Christian heart, in which the love of Christ is strong, can ever look on the symbol of His Passion without emotion. A faded ribbon, a withered flower, an old book of poems, may sometimes move us to tears by recalling the memory of those whom we loved and lost, and the pathetic memories which gather round the death of Christ must invest the very form of His cross with infinite sacredness. But if once you permit the deeper religious emotions to become attached, however slightly, to a material symbol, there is the beginning of that very superstition which this Second Commandment forbids. The material symbol has become sacred to you; there is no real sacredness in it. You remember the keen and contemptuous sarcasm with which Isaiah illustrated the folly of the idolater. "He heweth

him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it Then shall it be for a man to burn: . . . He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god." Your cross is common wood—part of the same block may have been made into a frame for the portrait of an opera dancer. It is common metal, and the same hands which wrought the trinket into its sacred form, may have made of the same gold the head of a fox which was hanging a few months ago to the chain of some foolish lad who has been obliged to pawn his watch and his chain to pay the bets he lost on the last Derby Day. If you feel that your cross is sacred, you are beginning to bow down before it and to worship it; for worship is but the recognition of what is sacred and divine.

On the other hand, if your cross is not sacred to you, if it is a trinket and nothing more, your religious emotions are sluggish and your heart is very cold. To regard as a mere ornament the visible memorial of the sufferings which are the

supreme manifestation of God's love, the great hope of our race, the ground of our deliverance from the pains of eternal death, appears to me either impossible to a Christian heart or a sign of strange insensibility to what ought to stir all the deepest and strongest passions of our nature.

But still, it may be asked, If a picture, a crucifix, or a cross touches my heart, why may I not use it? If I feel that Christ is nearer to me when I see on the canvas the infinite sadness, the perfect purity, the yearning love which some devout painter has expressed in His countenance, and when I see in ivory the image of the agonies which He endured for my salvation, why should I reject their aid?

I have already reminded you that precisely the same argument might have been used in defence of the golden calf which Aaron, in violation of this Commandment, made to be a symbol of Jehovah. The sight of the calf made Jehovah's presence more vividly real to the half-barbarous people who shouted and danced before it. But was He really nearer to them in that hour of wild excitement than He was before? Was not their religious passion based upon a lie? And what proof can be given that our vivid conception of Christ's nearness to us when our emotions are excited by some miracle of Art is at all more true? Our hearts ought to be moved by what God has

revealed to us of Himself—not by any inventions of our own. We have no more right to invent a Divine appeal to religious emotion than we have to invent a Divine appeal to the understanding or the conscience.

No doubt the sensuous excitement produced by the revelation which God has made of Himself in the history of our Lord Jesus Christ, and which is illustrated continually by that supernatural illumination which rests on all devout souls, is not so great as that which can be produced by sensuous means. But shall we venture to say that the story of Christ's miracles of compassion contained in the Gospels is not enough; that the mercy Christ manifested to sinful men when He was on earth bearing with their infirmities and lovingly forgiving their offences is not enough; that the remembrance of His agony and death is not enough; that the present revelations of the Holy Ghost are not enough; and that we are craving for an emotion which all these do not and cannot awaken? The almost invariable result of the use of inferior means of producing religious excitement is to make us indisposed to dwell on God's own revelation of His character and love. Religious sentiment is so much more easily touched by influences which appeal to it from below than by influences which appeal to it from above, that when once we have yielded to the spell of sensuous or

artistic religious excitement we are likely to find that the actual revelation of God to the conscience, the understanding, and the heart, has lost its power to move us.

It is not only by pictures and crucifixes that what is falsely supposed to be religious emotion may be stimulated into intense activity. The sermon may become a crucifix. The preacher may paint the sufferings of Christ as vividly as the artist. His "bloody sweat" in Gethsemane, the scourging by the soldiers, His faintness and exhaustion under the weight of the cross, His quivering anguish when the nails were driven through His hands, the convulsions of His whole frame when the cross was violently fixed into the ground, the fever and the thirst of His last hours —these have been rhetorically and passionately dwelt upon till women and children and even strong men have been tortured into an agony of sympathy and distress. That Roman Catholic preachers, with their taste corrupted by the sensuous traditions of their church, should have mistaken the vehemence of human passion for deep religious emotion is not wonderful; but too many Protestant preachers have committed the same error. The writers of the New Testament make no attempt to lacerate the heart by insisting on the details of our Lord's sufferings. They tell the story with a severity of self-restraint which shows

that their appeal was not addressed to the imagination, nor to the natural horror inspired by great physical anguish, but to the higher elements and susceptibilities of the soul. To know Christ merely "after the flesh," is not to know Him at all. We may be moved to a passion of tears while listening to a vivid description of all that He endured as the Sacrifice for the sin of the world, and yet feel neither penitence for our own sin nor gratitude for His love.

The principle which underlies this Commandment condemns many things to which we are strongly inclined.

I am a Puritan,—not by temperament, not by taste,—but as the result of convictions which have taken possession of my whole intellect and heart, and are inseparable from my whole conception of the revelation of God through Christ. Against my sympathies, I unhesitatingly honour the spirit which prompted the Puritans in their ruthless, unpitying, barbarous destruction of saintly images, of altars, of crucifixes, of gorgeous painted windows, of all the symbolic forms in which the ancient piety had visibly expressed its devotion and its faith. I say that I honour the spirit which prompted them. So far as they were guilty of the destruction of what was not their own, and of inflicting a wanton outrage on the religious sympathies and sensibilities of other men, I as vehe-

mently condemn them. But these embodiments of religious thought and feeling had degraded the national type of religious life, and the men were in the right who believed that their destruction was the indispensable condition of national regeneration. I remember how a Jewish king brake in pieces the brazen serpent, which Moses had made, because the people burnt incense to it—brake it in pieces, spoke of it contemptuously as a mere thing of brass, though it was made by God's own commandment, though in connection with it God had wrought a great and most wonderful miracle, and though it was the memorial not of human piety or genius but of the infinite grace and goodness of God; and I see that, like Hezekiah's, the iconoclastic zeal of the Puritans sprang from a noble passion to secure for God, and for God alone, the religious reverence of the people.

I am a Puritan. Church history makes me a Puritan. The philosophy of the religious life makes me a Puritan. Puritanism appears to me to be the highest expression of the spirit and genius of the Old Testament as well as of the New. I trust that I shall never be weary of protesting against every tendency to attach religious sanctity to any material thing. This building—consecrated though it may be to many of us by the holiest and most pathetic associations—is no House of God. Its walls have no sacredness which does not belong to

the walls of your warehouse, your counting house or your shop, to the courts in which magistrates administer justice, the galleries in which paintings are exhibited, the hall in which we meet to discuss national politics, or to listen to Handel, Mendelssohn, and Mozart. Do you say that it assists your devotion to feel that this is in a special sense the dwelling-place of God? Again I say, that the same kind of argument would have justified the Jews when they broke this Commandment by making the golden calf. Religious devotion not founded in truth must itself be false. If God is not here in any special sense, that cannot be true devotion which comes from believing that He is. The special presence of Christ is promised to consecrated persons, not to consecrated places. It is partly because we have lost our faith in the supernatural prerogatives of the Church itself that we have invented a supernatural sanctity for the building in which the Church assembles.

On the same principle I repudiate all signs and symbols which visibly invest the ministers of the Church with a sacred character. Even if I believed that Christian ministers have exclusive power to absolve from sin, and power to call the Personal Presence of the Lord Jesus Christ into the sacramental bread and wine, I do not think that I would have them clothed in symbolic vestments of silk and satin and velvet, enriched with golden embroi

dery and with precious stones. Jewish priests who offered a mere symbolic sacrifice might properly wear symbolic robes; but if Christian priests are really empowered to bring Christ Himself on to the altar, they dishonour their supernatural functions by appealing to the eye and to the fancy instead of appealing simply to the faith of their people. For us Nonconformists to dress up our ministers in rustling, official silks is effeminate sentimentalism. It is worse than that; the official robes encourage the disposition to invest the minister with an artificial sanctity. It is an attempt to sustain by sensuous means an authority which is purely spiritual.

The justice of the penalty which is denounced against those who transgress this Commandment it is very easy to dispute. The crime is to be punished not only in the men who are personally guilty, but in their descendants. The objection, however, if it can be maintained, lies not against this Commandment, nor against the Jewish revelation as a whole in which the principle of this threat is repeatedly asserted, but against the Divine order of human society. Every new age inherits confusion, difficulty, and suffering from the follies and crimes of the ages which have preceded it. The fathers ate sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge.

We never object, however, to the benefits which we inherit from our ancestors. There is no province of human life in which we are not reaping golden harvests which were sown for us by men of other generations. They cleared the forests and drained the marshes; ours are the rich pastures and the fenced cornfields. There is no mechanical invention by which the ease and comfort and safety of human life are increased, which has not been slowly perfected by the patient thought and labour—thought and labour which in many cases were quite unrewarded—of the men of remote centuries. Our just laws and the political institutions which secure the freedom and order of the State are not our own work; we owe them to the courage, the sagacity, and the heroic endurance of a long succession of obscure as well as illustrious ancestors. Our fathers have created for us a wealthy literature. Even those broad and simple principles of morality which, to us, carry with them their own evidence of authority and obligation, would have been unknown to us but for the virtue of preceding generations. It was not in our boyhood or even in our infancy that the education began by which we have been trained to habits of industry, truthfulness, honesty, and self-control. Whatever virtue exists in England to-day has come from the moral discipline of many centuries.

But that same unity of the race by which the results of the virtue and genius of one age are transmitted to the ages which succeed it, renders it inevitable that the results of the folly and vice of one age should be entailed on the ages which succeed it. The tares which our fathers have sown must be ours as well as the wheat.

And yet, as the sanction of this Commandment suggests, the righteousness of men endures longer than their sin. "The third and fourth generation" may suffer the penalty of great crimes; but thousands of generations cannot wholly exhaust the reward of fidelity to God and obedience to His Commandments. The evil which comes from man's wickedness endures for a time, but perishes at last; the good that comes from man's well-doing is all but indestructible. The martyrs of the early ages of the Church still sustain our courage when we are tempted to be false to conscience and to God; the power of their persecutors to resist the Faith of Christ has been broken for ever. The treachery of kings and the profligacy of nobles in the evil times of our own history cannot imperil our freedom or corrupt our national morality; but the sanctity, and the learning, and the zeal, of Hooker, and Jeremy Taylor, and Howe, and Baxter, and Owen are still among the strong defences of our religious life, and John Milton re-kindles the fire of patriotism and of a

noble passion for liberty in every new generation. It is the virtue of the remote past which is alive with us in the present; its vice has passed away. It is the wisdom which remains; the folly is forgotten.

"I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." There *is* an obvious reason why the Divine "Jealousy" should resent the crime forbidden in the Second Commandment. The Commandment, as I have reminded you again and again, is not directed against the worshipping of false gods. Whatever religious emotion may be excited by the virtues or achievements ascribed to other divinities may be said, in a sense, to belong to them. But for the Jewish people to make an image of anything in Heaven above, or in the earth beneath, and to bow before it with the awe and gratitude created by Jehovah's wonderful revelations to themselves and their fathers, was to transfer to a material symbol of Jehovah the religious reverence which belonged to Jehovah Himself. The wild excitement with which they danced before the golden calf was fed and intensified by their remembrance of the plagues of Egypt and the passage of the Red Sea. It was emotion created by what God Himself had done which made their worship of the idol so passionate. It was this which provoked God to "Jealousy." The crime was not to be tolerated.

I suppose that there are some of you who think that to speak of God as "a jealous God" is to use language unworthy of His infinite majesty. The longer I live the more clearly I see that the strong, bold words of the Old Testament writers —words which throb with life, and are coloured through and through with human passion—are the best and truest words in which to speak of God. Be sure of it, that when God comes near to you, these are the only words in which you will find it possible to speak of Him. The pale, dead epithets of metaphysical theologians who seem afraid to suggest that God is alive, their catalogues of Divine "attributes," may be well enough when God is "afar off," but when He is "nigh at hand" we want words of another sort.

What, after all, lies at the root of this revelation of God as "a jealous God"? Jealousy is but the anger and pain of injured and insulted Love. When God resents the illegitimate transfer to material symbols of the devotion inspired by His own acts, it is not because His greatness suffers any diminution or because His authority is impaired. It is His Love which is wounded. He cannot endure to lose any of the affection, trust, or reverence by which He has stirred our souls. It is the energy of His Love for us which makes Him long for all the poor treasure of our hearts, and if that treasure is not devoted to Him, He

tells us that in His "jealousy" He will visit "the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." One of the fairest-looking falsehoods by which men excuse themselves for living a life in which God has no place is the plea that the infinite God cannot care for the love and reverence of such creatures as we are. When will men understand that no Father can ever be great enough to be indifferent to the affection, the obedience, and the confidence of his children?

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain."
—EXODUS xx. 7.

AMONG ancient nations the names of men were very commonly significant. It is the same among uncivilised races in our own time. Names were given to children suggested by the circumstances of their birth, or expressing the hopes and wishes of their parents in relation to their children's character or fortunes. The name of a man was sometimes changed in consequence of some remarkable event in his history.

Isaac's name perpetuated the remembrance of Abraham's joy and surprise when the promise was made to him that he should have a child in his old age. Samuel's name was given to him because in his birth God had heard his mother's prayer for a son. Jacob's name was changed to Israel because of the urgency and success of his prayer. He was a prince, and had power with God as well as with men. There was a time when the names which are common among ourselves

had their meaning too, but the meaning has been lost or at least is never thought of. The family name passes from father to son. The Christian name, which, by the way, is our real name, we select because it has a pleasant sound, or to express our affection and respect for some one else who has borne it.

But when this Commandment was given, a man's name stood for something. It "connoted," as logicians say, his occupation or something that had happened to him or some great achievement which had made him famous, or some physical peculiarity, or some moral quality.

In the same way God's name was significant. It was a name and something more. It was a revelation of what God is. It summed up what God had made known of Himself to man.

There is a curious question suggested by this subject of names. What do they represent? When I speak of a horse, does that word "horse" stand for a certain collection of qualities which I have observed in an animal or for the animal itself? Those of you who have studied the science of Logic know that there is an ancient controversy about this—a controversy which has lasted for centuries, and which, I suppose, is not yet finally settled. The controversy relates principally to what are called common or generic names—names given, that is, to classes of

things; but it also relates to proper names, the names of particular persons, places, or things.

For myself, I believe that the name of a man stands for the man himself, and not for my conception of him. It stands not for any thought in my mind, but for the man to whom it belongs. When I say that Paris is being besieged by the Prussian army, I do not mean that an idea which I have in my own mind, and which has been formed from what I have seen and read of a certain great city, is being besieged by another thought which I have, and which has been gradually formed by what I have seen and read of a powerful army. I mean that a collection of magnificent streets, and palaces, and museums, and fortifications is being besieged by a body of men whose homes are in Germany and who have already destroyed powerful armies and taken strong cities.

This may seem to some of you a very trifling and unnecessary distinction. Questions of great importance to the highest life of man often seem trifling to those who have not had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with what they really mean. To a child many things seem of no account, which you know may entail suffering and death. There was a time in the history of Europe when the controversy about what a name represents involved issues so grave that men were burnt for taking what was considered the heretical side

of this controversy. The whole question of the Roman Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation was involved in it. We look back upon the excitement which it created with something like pity as well as astonishment, and I suppose that most people think that neither the Nominalists nor the Realists, as the hostile parties were called, had arrived at a true solution of the difficulty.

But, dismissing that old dispute, I say that a name stands, not for my thought about a man, but for the man himself. The name of Luther does not stand for the moral qualities and intellectual powers which I may attribute to the great Reformer. It does not represent the courage, the religious passion, the vehemence, the tenderness which I think existed in him. Nor does it represent the immorality, the self-will, the obstinacy, and the impatience of just authority, which may be attributed to him by his enemies. It stands for Luther himself, and to know what the name stands for, I must know Luther—the words, the acts, the sufferings in which Luther revealed his life. So God's name stands for God. It does not represent certain attributes which I think God possesses, but it represents God Himself; and really to know the name of God I must know the acts and words in which God revealed Himself. Indeed, for a true and deep knowledge of it, I must have a direct and immediate knowledge of God. When

therefore, we see that God has taken successive names in the supernatural revelation which He has made of Himself to mankind, this suggests to us that, as time has gone on, He Himself has been more and more perfectly revealed to our race.

To the patriarchs, the name under which God was chiefly known was the name Almighty. When He revealed Himself to Moses, it was under the name Jehovah. Christ revealed God under the name of the Father. He said in His last prayer, "I have manifested Thy name unto the men Thou gavest me out of the world," meaning that He had made known to man the kinship between man and God, the wonderful love and compassion implied in the Divine Fatherhood, and the new form which the Divine authority assumes now that God has revealed Himself as being something more to us than our Creator and Ruler. Christ made it possible for us to call God our Father, and for us to see in God all that the name contains.

The name of God stands for Himself and for that which He has revealed of Himself, not for our thoughts about Him.

This Commandment brings us back to the name under which God manifested Himself to Moses, and which we, not very accurately, call Jehovah. There is very strong evidence that this name had stood for God long before the time of Moses, but what the name contained had been very imper-

fectly made known. The case is very similar to the revelation of the name of the Father by our Lord Jesus Christ. God had been addressed as a Father before Christ came, though very rarely; but there had been no full and rich manifestation of God's Fatherhood. At the coming of Christ the name received new depths of meaning, and we feel now, that it is the truest and noblest name for expressing God's relation to mankind.

Not only did God, at this time, emphatically call the attention of the Jewish race to all that is included in the name Jehovah, the name became what we call His "proper name," as the God of the nation which He had redeemed from Egypt.

The name "connotes" God's eternity. It affirms that He is the God that was, that is, and that will be. There was very much in the actual position of the people which rendered it possible for them to receive this new and great name for God. Several generations had passed away since God had spoken to Abraham. His descendants were now about to be organised into a nation, and to enter upon a new period of their history. Promises which had been given several hundred years before were now beginning to be fulfilled; hundreds of years might have to pass away before the unknown wealth of those promises would be exhausted. The people must have begun to feel that they had a History and that they had a Future. A vivid

sense of relationship to past generations and to coming generations can hardly be developed among races which have no true national life. It became possible to the Jews when they were being organised into a nation. What had happened long ago was bearing its fruit in their deliverance from slavery; the Law which they were now receiving was to control the history of their descendants. They were just in the mood which rendered it possible for God to reveal Himself as the First and the Last, the ever-living God, the God whom their fathers had trusted and feared, the God whom their children, to the remotest generations, must obey. A great step was gained in the religious education of mankind—a step the magnitude of which we can hardly estimate. The Past, the Present, and the Future, were bound together in God. All human history and all human hopes now rested in Him. The soul of man rose to the great idea that not only was there but one God, the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, He was also Jehovah, the God that was, that is, and that will be; He did not inherit His greatness from any God whose power had decayed, and whose ancient glory had sunk into darkness, and He would continue to be God for ever and ever.

It is not surprising that this great name was soon invested with a superstitious sanctity. It

is said that the Jews kept it as a wonderful and mysterious secret among themselves, and never used it in their intercourse with the heathen. Even the Jews used it rarely. There is a tradition that it was heard but once a year, when it was uttered by the High Priest on the great day of Atonement. In reading the Scriptures it became customary never to pronounce it, but to replace it, wherever it occurred, with another Divine name, which was regarded as less awful and august. The proof of this reverential custom is perpetuated in our Hebrew Bibles. Hebrew used to be written, as some systems of shorthand are written, without the vowels. The vowels were gradually introduced in comparatively recent times to preserve the traditional pronunciation. But the name Jehovah is not written with the vowels which belong to it; it has the vowels which belong to that other Divine name which was read in its place. Unfortunately, in our authorised English version, in many passages where the Hebrew writers wrote "Jehovah," the translators have written "Lord," which is the title whose vowels are given to the name "Jehovah" in the present Hebrew text. Sometimes the change greatly obscures the meaning.

It is not by such observances as these, that we are to show our reverence for God; and the third

Commandment requires something very different from this ceremonial homage to His name. His name stands for Himself—for Himself in His relations to mankind, and as He has revealed Himself to our race; it sums up and includes all that He has made known of His nature, His character, and His will. It is to Him that our reverence is due.

There are many ways in which we may transgress this Commandment. It is common for those who illustrate its meaning to insist especially on the guilt of using the name of God to sanction and confirm a lie. Perjury is a most deliberate and daring form of the sin which this Commandment forbids.

There are circumstances in which a direct and solemn appeal to God in support of the truth of what we are affirming is perfectly lawful. God claims authority over the whole of human life. We have to give account to Him of all our words and deeds. There are times when, by a deliberate act, we may voluntarily recognise the Divine presence and the Divine authority, may declare that what we are saying we are saying with a distinct and vivid sense that God hears us, and may ask those who listen to us to listen as in God's sight. To do this is to take an oath; to do this when we are appealed to in God's name by others is to take an oath; and in this sense the

taking of an oath is sanctioned by the example of Christ and the Apostles.

There is a special propriety in investing testimony given before a court of justice with these solemnities. If, indeed, a man denies the existence of God it is monstrous that he should lose any civil rights because he refuses the oath which derives all its sanctity from the Faith which he rejects. It is equally monstrous that he should suffer any disadvantage because he doubts the lawfulness of swearing.

But where there is a general consent in the acknowledgment, both of God's existence and of His moral relations to mankind, the Judicial Oath recalls the great fact that Society rests on a Divine foundation.

Forms of government are constructed and modified by human sagacity or folly. Government itself belongs to the Divine Order of the world. The State is an institution not less Divine than the family. Human magistrates represent the justice of God in the secular and temporal sphere of human life. When a Witness is making his deposition, when a Judge is pronouncing sentence, they are discharging grave functions which arise out of the Divine Order of Human Society. It is fitting that they should both be reminded of the solemnity and dignity of their position. The oath reminds the witness that his evidence must

be neither perverted nor coloured by passion, or fear, or personal animosity, but that he must tell the bare and naked truth, for through him the Divine will is to be done through "the powers" which are "ordained of God" for the punishment of evil doers and the defence of those that do well. It reminds the judge that he is "the minister of God" and that the Judge of all the earth will one day call him to account if he justifies the guilty or condemns the innocent.

Perjury is a great crime, and is properly punished with severe penalties. If tolerated it would dissolve human society and break up the very foundations of the State. It is a great sin as well as a great crime. To appeal to God with a lie on our lips is most presumptuously and blasphemously to take His name in vain; it is an insult to His hatred of falsehood; it is to treat His majesty with contempt; it is to defy the terrors of His judgment-seat, before which He has declared that we must give account of all our words and deeds.

Of the guilt of common profanity, by which I mean the flippant and reckless use of the Divine Name in ordinary conversation, it is not necessary for me to say much. There was a time when this practice seems to have been the mark of a fine gentleman. It is now the sign of vulgarity. There is something appalling in the consideration

that we have a greater dread of violating the conventional maxims of good society than of transgressing the laws of God. When profanity was only a sin against God it was a common offence; it has disappeared since it became "vulgar." If men are guilty of it now, it is inferred that they are accustomed to live in coarse and brutal company, and it is acknowledged that whatever their social rank may be, they can hardly claim to be gentlemen.

Except among the very lowest orders of society, the offence is now almost confined to very young men who want to make it understood that they are no longer children, and who think that the best way to do this, is to show their contempt for the habits of decent reverence which they learnt from their parents and teachers. "It is difficult," as Robert Hall has said, "to account for a practice, which gratifies no passion, and promotes no interest, unless we ascribe it to a certain vanity of appearing superior to religious fear, which tempts men to make bold with their Maker. If there are hypocrites in religion"—he continues—"there are also, strange as it may appear, hypocrites in impiety, men who make an ostentation of more irreligion than they possess. An ostentation of this nature, the most irrational in the records of human folly, seems to lie at the root of profane swearing. It may not be improper to remind

such as indulge in this practice, that they need not insult their Maker to show that they do not fear Him; that they may relinquish this vice without fear of being supposed to be devout; and that they may safely leave it to the other parts of their conduct to efface the smallest suspicion of their piety."

A far more common form of irreverence in our own time is the practice of finding material for jesting in Holy Scripture. A very little wit will go a long way if we can only make up our minds to trifle with what is sacred.

I do not believe that wit and humour are to be excluded from God's service, or that there is no place for them in the illustration of Divine truth. You remember Pascal's famous sentence in the Provincial letters in reply to the Jesuits, who charged him with turning sacred things into ridicule. "There is a vast difference," he says, "between laughing at religion and laughing at those who profane it by their monstrous and extravagant opinions. In making a jest of your morality I am as far from sneering at holy things, as the doctrine of your casuists is from the doctrine of the gospel."

In the exposition of truth, as well as in the refutation of error, I see no reason why wit should be forbidden to render its service as well as logic, fancy, and imagination. Why should any faculty

of that nature, which God made in His image, be forbidden to glorify Him? Who will venture to call it common and unclean? If any part of my nature is withdrawn from the service of God, I am, so far as that is concerned, not completely His.

The traditional exclusion from the pulpit of humour and wit, dates from the worst and most artificial times of its history. The ancient preachers, the great preachers of the middle ages, the Puritan preachers, when they had the faculty, used it; and used it with wonderful effect. They did not think it necessary to be dull in order to be devout.

But as it is possible to use wit as the friend and ally of Divine truth, it is also possible to make Divine truth itself the mere material of wit.

Nothing is more easy than to create a laugh by a grotesque association of some frivolity with the grave and solemn words of Holy Scripture. But surely this is profanity of the worst kind. By this Book the religious life of men is quickened and sustained. It contains the highest revelations of Himself which God has made to man. It directly addresses the conscience and the heart, and all the noblest faculties of our nature, exalting our idea of duty, consoling us in sorrow, redeeming us from sin and despair, and inspiring us with the hope of immortal blessedness and glory. Listening to its words, millions have heard the very voice of

God. It is associated with the sanctity of many generations of saints. Such a book cannot be a fit material for the manufacture of jests. For my own part, though I do not accept Dr. Johnson's well known saying, that "a man who would make a pun would pick a pocket," I should be disposed to say that a man who deliberately and conciously uses the words of Christ, of Apostles, and of Prophets, for mere purposes of merriment, might have chalked a caricature on the wall of the Holy of Holies, or scrawled a witticism on the sepulchre in Joseph's garden.

Nor is it Holy Scripture alone which, from its relationship to God, is invested with a sanctity which it is profanity to violate. Wherever God reveals Himself we should reverence Him, and it is a transgression of this commandment to bring into contempt any manifestation of His character and will.

I do not know that our own age is distinguished from all preceding times by the wantonness and frivolity with which it treats all that is grave. solemn, and august; but whatever may be our comparative guilt, it is incontestable that very much of our literature is utterly destructive of that serious earnestness with which human life has always been regarded by men of any depth of moral nature; and this universal flippancy is ruinous to the spirit of reverence, and betrays us

too often into gross profanity. There is, no doubt, a profound sadness, a sorrowful sense of the vanity of all earthly things, which often underlies the most brilliant wit and the most cynical humour. The men in whose writings these qualities have been most conspicuous, have often been the victims of the deepest melancholy. It was their sense of the frivolity of the objects which create the greatest and most passionate excitement among men, the utter worthlessness and triviality of a thousand pursuits to which men devote their genius and their energy, the transitoriness of all human glory, which made them mock at the pomps and splendours, the pleasures and even the griefs of mankind. They made merry with what other men regard as most serious, not because their hearts were light, but because they saw the vanity and the unreality of the honours, and the wealth, and the greatness of the world. The sadness was often morbid; it was not the less deep and real.

But the literature of which I complain is of a very different kind. It is not written by men who are so overshadowed by the dark and gloomy aspects of the universe that they cannot but laugh at the misplaced earnestness of those who are spending money for that which is not bread, and labour for that which satisfieth not, but by men who seem utterly incapable of recognising the

difference between what is most frivolous and what is most appalling or Divine.

I have read letters in some newspapers during the last few weeks from war correspondents, who seemed so absorbed in their solicitude to say something smart and clever, that they were altogether untouched by the agonies of wounded soldiers, the miseries of starving and homeless peasants, the tears of wives who had become widows, and of children who had become fatherless. They seem to have followed the march of great armies, and to have recorded the siege of cities, and the burning of villages, with only one desire, the desire to find a new stimulant for their feeble and exhausted wit.

I remember too to have seen a book, which may indeed be better than its title—a book called "The Comic History of England." I declare that I can hardly conceive of anything more monstrously profane. To a devout heart, there appears throughout our history the perpetual manifestation of the wonderful power and goodness of God. We have as much reason to thank God for the statesmen and heroes that surrounded the throne of Elizabeth, for the courage and genius of Cromwell, for the sagacity of William III., as ever the Jews had to thank God for Joshua, for Jephthah, or for Gideon; I see His hand as clearly in the storms which raged round our coast when

the Spanish Armada made its descent upon us, as in the destroying angel that smote the army of the Assyrians, encamped around Jerusalem. The life and history of a nation are too great to be degraded and dishonoured by being made the material for mere amusement and fun. The spirit which renders that possible is inconsistent with reverence for God Himself. If we love not our brother whom we have seen, we cannot love God whom we have not seen; and if we feel no wonder and awe in the presence of the tragedy of human life we are incapable of the devout and reverential fear which should be inspired by the majesty of God.

There is another habit which is more obviously and directly a violation of this command, I mean the habit of scoffing at those who profess to live a religious life and taking every opportunity of sneering at their imperfections. It is easy enough, no doubt, to discover grave infirmities and faults in most Christian people. It is because they know that they are sinful men that they are trusting in Christ to save them. Their very confession of faith in Him is a confession of their own sinfulness. They do not profess to be better than other men; they acknowledge that they have no strength to do the will of God, and that they are continually breaking God's Commandments. It would be brutal cruelty to make a jest of the

weakness and sufferings of the patients in a hospital—to sneer at one man because he is prostrate with fever, at another because his broken arm is bound up and useless, at another because his face is still disfigured by an explosion which nearly destroyed his life It is because they have been injured by accidents, or smitten down by disease, that they are there. And it is because Christian men are conscious of their sin, and of their inability to escape from it without supernatural help, that they are clinging to Christ to save them. You, who speak so contemptuously of our failings are probably not quite free from imperfection. The difference between us is very simple; *we* have learnt that our sins have provoked the anger of God, and have entreated Him to pardon us—*you* have not; *we* are conscious that apart from the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost we can never recover the image of God,—*you* appear to believe that whatever virtue is necessary to you is within the reach of your own strength. If there are faults on both sides, we have a better right to scoff at you than you have to scoff at us. We, at least, acknowledge our weakness and guilt; you do not acknowledge yours.

Whatever may be the imperfections of Christian people, they are trying to vindicate and assert the authority and greatness of God. Their aim is that God's will may be done on earth as it is done in

heaven. If you yourselves are doing nothing to maintain the remembrance among men of God's infinite majesty, take care how you scoff at those who, with whatever vacillation and infirmity of purpose, are trying to maintain it. The real effect of your scoffing is to dishonour religious faith itself, and to bring God and the service of God into contempt.

It is not enough that we avoid the sin of profanity; we are bound to cultivate and to manifest that reverence for God's majesty and holiness which lies at the root of all true religion. We have to worship Him. It is very possible to be regular in our attendance at the services of the church, and yet to neglect this duty. We may have a keen, intellectual interest in the discussion of the doctrines, the ethics, and the history of the Christian faith, and yet offer to God no true worship. Our hearts may be touched by the pathos and solemnity of prayer, and may be thrilled by the exultation and triumphant joy of some great hymn of praise, while we are altogether insensible to the brightness of the Divine glory. The awe and the fear which have filled the hearts of saints in the presence of God are very different from the transient religious sentiment created by the venerable associations which consecrate an ancient liturgy, or by the beauty, tenderness, and grace,

the passion, and the fervour, which are sometimes found in the free prayer of our own churches. I am not sure that the increased importance which, during the last few years, has been given to the devotional part of Nonconformist services, is a satisfactory proof that we are at all more devout than our fathers. We have made the form of our services more beautiful; it is not certain that we bow before God with a deeper reverence, and wonder, and awe. It is the "pure in heart" who see God, and only when we see God face to face can we worship Him in spirit and in truth. I am not sure that we are holier than our fathers were, and, therefore, I am not sure that we offer to God a devouter worship than theirs. We must know God in order to worship Him, and the habits of our times are unfriendly to that prolonged and quiet communion with God without which the knowledge of Him is impossible. We shall not deepen the spirit of devotion in our churches by adding to the beauty and solemnity of our public services. What we need is a clearer vision of God and a profounder and more constant sense of the truth of the ancient words that "the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity, whose name is Holy," is really near to them that are of a contrite and humble spirit, rejoices in their thanksgivings and answers their prayers.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shal thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it."—EXODUS xx. 8–11.

YOU will remember that in the second chapter of the book of Genesis, in immediate connection with the story of the creation, it is said that "on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made."

It has been hastily inferred from this, that the Sabbath was imposed as a law upon Adam himself, as some think, in Paradise, or, as others think, immediately after the Fall. But this early reference to the Sabbath in the book of Genesis, is no proof of its early institution.

There can be no doubt that in the Pentateuch, Moses—if, as I believe, he partly edited, and partly wrote it—embodied traditions and documents which had been preserved from the earliest times, and had descended to the Jewish people through the patriarchs; but there can be just as little doubt that Moses felt himself at perfect liberty to introduce additions, explanations, and comments of his own.

Suppose that I were writing a life of Christ: I should begin with an account of His birth, and I might very naturally add that Christmas Day was instituted to commemorate it, without meaning to imply that the institution of Christmas Day dates from the time of Christ, or even from the time of the apostles. We know that it had a much later origin. And so it is perfectly intelligible that when Moses was writing the account of God's resting on the seventh day, he should add that this was the ground and reason of the institution of the Sabbath, although the Sabbath may not have been instituted till many centuries later.

That the Sabbath was instituted immediately after the creation of man is supposed to be proved by the indications which are tolerably numerous in the book of Genesis, that the custom of dividing time into weeks of seven days, existed in the very earliest periods of the world's history. But this does not affect the question. There were many

ancient nations which divided time in this way. The Egyptians did it. The Chaldeans did it. The Greeks, who at first divided the month into three periods of ten days, afterwards found it more convenient to adopt the week of seven days. The Romans who, almost till the time of Christ, had a week of eight days, made the same change. The same division of time has found its way into India, though whether it was carried there by the Mahometans, or by the Buddhists is uncertain. Curiously enough the week of seven days—or something very near to it—was found to exist among the nations of Peru. But though there is this general concurrence in the practice of dividing time into periods of seven days, there is no such agreement in the custom of observing one of these seven days as a Sabbath. If in a document or an inscription referring to the habits of some ancient people you discovered a reference to the existence among them of this convenient grouping of days into sevens, it would be altogether illegitimate to conclude that they had a day of rest or of worship, either at the beginning, or at the end, or in the middle of the week.

Although there are very many references to *weeks* in the book of Genesis, there is not a solitary passage which even suggests that the patriarchs kept the seventh day or any other day as a Sabbath. There is nothing about a weekly

rest. There is nothing about the consecration of one day in every week to worship.

I have very little doubt that in the earliest times God revealed Himself to man as the Creator of all things, and in condescension to the limitations of the human intellect gave to man that representation of the creative work which constitutes the basis of the wonderful Psalm contained in the first chapter of the book of Genesis. That revelation, I also believe, suggested the thought of dividing time into weeks of seven days each; and this division of time has gradually extended over a very large part of the world. But, I repeat, the practice of dividing time into weeks is one thing; the practice of keeping one day in every week as a Sabbath is a very different thing; and of this there is not the faintest trace till after the exodus of the Jewish people from Egypt.

In behalf of the earlier origin of the Sabbath it is alleged that the suspension on the seventh day of the supply of manna proves that the Sabbath was recognised as a day of rest before the giving of the Ten Commandments, but it proves nothing more than this, that God began to prepare the people for the Sabbath before its actual institution.

It is also alleged that the word "Remember" in the Fourth Commandment implies that the Sabbath was known before the Commandment was given, since they could not "Remember" the

Sabbath, if this was the first time it was instituted. This is certainly a most curious argument. Its force is broken by our most familiar habits of speech. When I say to a friend who is going to London, "Remember to call at such and such a bookseller's, and get me such and such a book," I do not mean that I ever asked him to render me this service before; and if he said, "I cannot 'remember' it because this is the first time you have spoken about it," I should probably think that he had gone mad. I should answer, "I do not want you to remember now, at this moment, anything I asked you yesterday; but when you are in London, and you have the opportunity of calling at the bookseller's, I want you to remember *then* what I ask you *now*." And so this Fourth Commandment is a Commandment requiring the Jewish people to "remember," when the seventh day came round, to keep it holy.

There is another ground on which it is sometimes alleged that the Sabbath must have been instituted immediately after the creation of man. Our Lord said, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath," and I have no doubt that there have been many sermons preached on that text, in which the preacher has vehemently exclaimed, "Yes, for *man;* not for the *Jew*, but for man, whatever his race, whatever his colour, whatever his language; all men need the Sabbath,

and it was made for all men." But clearly that was not what Christ meant. He did not say that the Sabbath was made for man, not for the Jew merely, but that "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath," meaning, to quote the felicitous language of Mr. Rogers, "to inculcate the great principle, illustrated by a special instance, that all ritual and positive ordinances of religion must be for the sake of the worshipper, not the worshipper for the sake of them. Had he, therefore, been speaking of any such institution as on *all* hands was acknowledged to belong exclusively to the Jews and in which the Christians had no part, it would have been equally natural and appropriate for Him to use just the language He did. For example, had it been the Passover or Circumcision that was in question, it would have been equally natural to remind his auditors that these were made for man (for the *Jews*, indeed, in this case, but still as they were men), and not man for the Passover or Circumcision."

There is yet another—motive—I must call it rather than argument, which induces some excellent Christian people to assert that the Sabbath was instituted immediately after the creation. They see that there is no commandment to keep the Sabbath in the New Testament. The Fourth Commandment was given to the Jews, and they have some difficulty in determining how it can

be shown to have authority for us; and therefore they are anxious to believe that Adam himself was required to keep the Sabbath, supposing that this would make the Sabbath of universal and perpetual obligation. Of course, no real proof that Adam received a commandment to keep the Sabbath can be founded on the alleged necessity of such a commandment, for the support of the present obligation resting on all men to keep a weekly day of rest. But if such a commandment had been actually given and distinctly recorded in Holy Scripture, I do not know why it should have any greater authority for us than the Commandment given to the Jews. The Jewish revelation has become obsolete because a nobler revelation has been made in Christ; but the Jewish revelation itself was nobler than any previous revelation, and if Moses has vanished in the diviner glory of Christ, all that preceded Moses must have vanished too.

Dismissing, therefore, all arbitrary fancies about a primitive Sabbath, let us consider the characteristics of the Sabbath given to the Jews.

(1) *The Jewish Sabbath was founded on a definite Divine command.* About the duty of keeping it there could be no doubt. It was instituted by the same authority that instituted the Feast of the Passover and the Rite of Circumcision. It was invested with exceptional solemnity by

being placed among the fundamental laws of the nation.

(2) *The particular Day which was to be kept as a Sabbath was authoritatively determined.* The nation was not left at liberty to make the first day of the week a Sabbath, or the second, or the third. For a Jew to have rested on the first day and worked on the seventh would have been a presumptuous violation of the Divine law.

(3) *The purpose of the day was expressly defined.* It was a commemoration of the great work of Creation, and a profession of religious faith in Jehovah as the Maker of the heavens and the earth.

In Deuteronomy, singularly enough, Moses omits this reason for the institution of the Sabbath, and reminds the people of their bondage in Egypt, partly to enforce the duty of giving the Sabbatic rest to their servants and partly to connect the remembrance of their rest from the sordid and intolerable labours of their Egyptian bondage with the weekly rest of the Sabbath. "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. And

remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day."—Deut. v. 14, 15.

(4) *The manner in which the Sabbath was to be kept was very distinctly stated.* The Commandment was definite—"In it thou shalt not do any work."

The Commandment does not forbid recreation. From the earliest to the latest times, the Jews seem to have regarded the Sabbath as the proper day for family parties and friendly festivals. The early Christian Fathers taunt them with their luxurious and self-indulgent manner of spending the day. Augustine tells them that it would be better to plough on the Sabbath than to dance. Whether as a moralist he was right or wrong, it is quite clear that dancing on the Sabbath was not forbidden to the Jew, but ploughing was forbidden.

It was not lawful to kindle a fire on the Sabbath, and, as Mr. Rogers says in the article from which I have already quoted, "When the Jews gave a Sabbath dinner party the collation was probably cold," but he adds that "in the climate of Syria this was no great matter." Michaelis, however, tells us that the later Jews had a method

of keeping hot for very many hours, the dishes which were prepared before the Sabbath began; and this ingenious invention may have come down to them from very early times. Some of the Rabbis made it a religious duty to have at least three meals on the Sabbath; so far from supposing that the law required that the day should be kept as a fast, they insisted—and, as I think, rightly—that the very idea and purpose of the day required that it should be kept as a festival.

There is a passage in Isaiah, about the Sabbath, which has been very much misunderstood. The prophet, speaking in God's name, promises his countrymen large and glorious blessings, if they will faithfully obey this Fourth Commandment. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words;" then joy in God, security, and glory will be the crown and reward of obedience. It is supposed that Isaiah required the Jews to keep what has been called a Puritanical Sabbath. I believe that this is a complete misconception of the prophet's meaning.

Their "own ways," which the people were forbidden to follow on the Sabbath, were the com-

mon secular labours of the week. Doing their "own pleasure" has no reference to recreation or amusement. Some translators render it doing their "own business;" but it probably means here, as it constantly means elsewhere, doing "what they liked." Luther translates it admirably, doing their "own will." They were to spend the Sabbath, as God had commanded them, in Rest; they were not at liberty to follow their own inclination, by carrying on their ordinary trade. Their "own words," which they were not to speak on the Sabbath, were the words in which their business was transacted, words which, like the business itself, belonged to the other days of the week. What the prophet forbids on the seventh day is what the Commandment forbids—not Pleasure but Work.

The stricter rabbinical schools built upon this general prohibition of all work, innumerable minute precepts, many of which are so grotesque that to quote them would be to answer no other purpose than to amuse you. One ingenious commentator, who happily appears to have had only a very few disciples, insisted that as it was a duty to rest from the beginning to the end of the Sabbath, all muscular exertion was sinful; and that, therefore, strict fidelity to the Commandment required that a man should remain during all the twenty-four hours of the Sabbath in exactly the same position, without moving a limb or a finger,

a kind of "Rest" which must have been very much more exhausting than hard work.

Nothing is said in the Commandment about the duty of celebrating public worship on the Sabbath. The reason is very simple; there was no public worship out of Jerusalem till after the Captivity. The law required that on the Sabbath the sacrifices in the Temple should be doubled, and this observance seems to have included the whole of the religious duties which were authoritatively connected with the consecrated day.

No doubt the Day itself reminded the people that Jehovah was the Creator of all things, and reminded them, too, of the great manifestations of His power and goodness in delivering their fathers from Egypt and giving the nation "Rest" in the Land of Promise. A devout Jew would be likely to spend part of the leisure which the day brought with it in silent meditation on the supernatural history of his race. Parents would show to their children "the praises of the Lord, and His strength, and His wonderful works which He had done . . . that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children; that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His Commandments." But if a man's own heart did not incline him to spend any part of the

Sabbath in religious observances, he could not be charged by priest or prophet with the sin of breaking the Commandment. The Law required Rest; it did not require Worship.

It is probable that the use of the word "Holy" in connection with the Sabbath confirms what I suppose is a common mistake about the manner in which the Jewish Sabbath had to be kept. A moment's consideration will enable you to perceive that this word implies nothing more than the "separation" of the day from common uses. Vessels employed in the service of the temple were "holy," though, of course, it was impossible that they should have any moral or religious character at all. Priests, even when their moral and religious character was altogether bad, were "holy" too. The "holiness" of the seventh day consisted in this, that it was fenced round against the intrusion of common work as a perpetual memorial of the Divine rest after the creation of all things.

(5) *The sanction which defended the law of the Sabbath was most severe;* the Sabbath-breaker was to be put to death.

The institution, as I have already said, was unique. Nothing like it, as far as I know, has ever been found among any other people. It was in harmony with the whole system of Judaism,

and was a most characteristic expression of one of the great ideas of which Judaism was the development. A nation was "set apart" from all other nations, was invested with special prerogatives, and entrusted with special duties; within that elect nation itself a tribe—the tribe of Levi—was "set apart" from all the other tribes and similarly distinguished; in that sacred tribe a priestly family—the family of Aaron—was "set apart" from all other families; in that family of priests an individual—the High Priest—was "set apart" from all other priests, and in him this idea of personal consecration to God was represented in its highest form. A sacred building—the Temple—was "set apart" from all other buildings as being God's dwelling-place; the inner-court was "set apart" from the rest of the Temple as being especially God's home; and in that inner court the Holy of Holies was "set apart" from the Holy Place itself, as the very chamber of the Divine presence. In the same way, the first fruits of the harvest were "set apart" for God, and the firstlings of the cattle; then a tithe was "set apart" from the rest of the crops and the rest of the flocks and herds; and probably a second tithe was taken from what remained, and similarly consecrated.

In harmony with these remarkable customs, the Seventh Day in every week was "set apart" as a

day in which no work was to be done; the seventh year was "set apart" as a year in which no seed was to be sown; and at the end of seven times seven years there was a great festival during which the whole land was to rest, and when debts were to be cancelled, alienated estates to return to their owners, and slaves to be set free.

Consecrated Men, consecrated Property, consecrated Space, consecrated Time, declared that God still claimed the world as His own, and that in all the provinces of human life He insisted on being recognised as Lord of all.

The separation of the Sabbath from the common uses of other days was an essential part of a vast and complicated system for the assertion and maintenance of certain great spiritual ideas. I do not wonder at the severity of the penalty attached to the crime of Sabbath-breaking. The High Priest himself was forbidden, under the penalty of death, to enter the Holy of Holies on any other than the day of Atonement. To violate the sanctity of that mysterious chamber was a profanation of the Space which God claimed as His own; to violate the Sabbath was a profanation of the Time which God claimed as His own. The defence of the sanctity of the Sabbath was exceptionally necessary in the early times of Jewish history. Before synagogues were built and public worship was celebrated in every part

of the country, the vast majority of the people, but for the institution of the Sabbath, would have been seldom reminded of God, except when they went up to Jerusalem to keep the great feasts. The weekly rest from their common labour was a constantly recurring appeal to them to remember the God of their fathers.

The Sabbath was a singularly beneficent institution. The law simply required abstinence from work. That this should ever be regarded as a severe and intolerable requirement is quite unintelligible. It was a law which gave freedom instead of imposing bondage. Human life indeed, was probably not so hard among the Jewish people in the better periods of their national history as it is among us. Their climate was kindly, and a great part of their soil fertile. There was a more equal distribution of wealth, and their wants were comparatively few and simple. There were not large masses of people congregated in great towns, many of them on the edge of starvation, and a vast proportion of the rest defending themselves from the same misery only by incessant and monotonous labour. No clouds of smoke hung over the cities of Judah and Israel. Nor was the roar of machinery heard in them. None of them were so large that the people were imprisoned in a wilderness of dreary and melancholy streets. They saw the sun; olive

trees and vineyards were within reach; the mountains were not far away; near to many of them were green pastures, and still waters, and the music of torrents, and the peace of lonely glens to give them refreshment and joy. And yet with the Jewish people, as with us, the greater part of life had to be spent in work, and in hard work too. Many a back ached through bending hour after hour over the vines; and the heat of the corn harvest and the vintage exhausted them. The shepherd had to walk over the rough hills after his wandering sheep, and the fisherman got weary of casting his net. An agricultural and a pastoral life, though it seems to us a life of romance and delight, brings the sweat to the brow and makes the limbs long for repose; and God in His goodness took the side of man against the inevitable hardships of his lot, and made rest from work a religious duty.

The Sabbath was a perpetual witness that though, under the actual conditions of our life in this world, severe toil may be absolutely inevitable, it is not God's will that all our days should be spent in drudgery. We were made for something better than that—for peace, for joy, and for freedom, and not for perpetual enthralment to the inferior necessities of our nature.

It was specially beneficent in relation to slaves. To them, at least, we may be sure that the

Sabbath was always "a delight." It was beneficent, too, in relation to the animals which man has subjected to his service, and for which rest is as necessary as for ourselves, if their life is to have any freshness, elasticity, and vigour.

There were some, no doubt, to whom the Sabbath was an offence and a constant source of vexation, men who were eager to accumulate wealth and who could not endure any suspension of business. Such men when the Sabbath came round looked upon their sons and their daughters and their slaves and their cattle taking their ease, and calculated how much they lost by this fantastic and absurd institution, reckoning, no doubt, in their folly, that if they could only make their people work seven days instead of six, they would increase their profits by the worth of the additional day's labour, and forgetting that they worked more effectively on the six days because they rested on the seventh; men who, to quote the words of Amos, asked impatiently, "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?" If you have any pity for the sufferings inflicted on such men as these by the compulsory weekly rest, I have none. That they were obliged, on one day in seven, to suspend all common work, was a singular proof of God's goodness, both to them and to the people under their power.

In what relation does the Jewish Sabbath stand to our Lord's Day? This is not a necessary part of my subject; for I am speaking about the Fourth Commandment, and it is quite clear that however rigidly or devoutly we may spend Sunday, we are not keeping the Sabbath. The Christian Sunday and the Jewish Sabbath are absolutely different institutions, different in almost every particular that constitutes a characteristic of either.

Let me remind you of the characteristics of the Sabbath which I enumerated just now:—

(1) The Sabbath was founded on a specific Divine command. We can plead no such command for the obligation to observe Sunday.

(2) The Sabbath was to be observed on a particular day which was determined by Divine authority; the Jews were commanded to keep "holy" the seventh day of the week. Among us the seventh is a common day, and it is the first day of the week that we celebrate as a religious festival.

(3) The purpose of the Sabbath was to commemorate the manifestation of God's power in the creation of all things, and of His goodness in redeeming the Jews from their misery in Egypt. The Christian Sunday commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

(4) Obedience to the law of the Sabbath required physical rest and nothing more; neither

public nor private worship constituted any part of the obligation which was imposed upon the Jews by the Fourth Commandment. The great object for which the Christian Sunday is set apart from other days, is to secure opportunity for religious thought, for thanksgiving, and for prayer.

(5) The penalty for breaking the Sabbath was Death. There is not a single sentence in the New Testament to suggest that we incur any penalty by violating the supposed sanctity of Sunday.

The only similarity between the Lord's Day and the Sabbath is that both recur once a week, and that both are religious festivals. But if you change the Day of a festival, change the Facts which it commemorates, and change the Manner of celebrating it, if one festival is instituted by the immediate authority of God and the other not, if one is protected by the Penalty of Death and the other by no Penalty at all, it is difficult to see how the two can be regarded as identical.

It was the grim custom of some of the old Nonconformists to celebrate the thirtieth of January, the anniversary of the beheading of King Charles, by a dinner. Suppose now that a man had directed in his will that this day should be kept by his children according to the traditions of Nonconformity. And suppose that his children, in their old age, had given up the dinner on the thirtieth of January in commemoration of the be-

heading of King Charles I., and, instead of that, had gone to church on the twenty-ninth of May to thank God for the return of King Charles II.—thus changing the day of the festival, changing the event which the day commemorated, and changing the manner of celebrating it,—do you think that the mere fact that in both cases a day was kept as an annual holiday, and as a holiday in celebration of a great national event, would have made the two days, in any rational sense, the same? Could they have appealed to their father's authority which required them to celebrate the first day as a sanction for their celebration of the second?

Now I do not mean to say that the spirit and idea of the Christian Sunday are as absolutely different from the spirit and idea of the Jewish Sabbath, as was the thanksgiving service at church for the return of Charles II. from the Nonconformist dinner in commemoration of the beheading of Charles I., but I do say that between the two religious institutions, as such, the differences are not less flagrant. Their direct origin is different; they are kept on different days; they are kept in a different manner; they commemorate different things.

At what time the early Jewish Christians ceased to keep the seventh day as a Sabbath is doubtful.

At first some of them appear to have made an effort to induce the Gentile converts to keep it, an effort which St. Paul firmly resisted. It is probable that the practice gradually died out like the practice of attending the Temple Service. The Apostles were in no haste to break up the ancient traditions and customs of their countrymen. They did not promulgate a new law abolishing the old. They permitted the old law to be gradually displaced and superseded by the growing strength of the life and spirit of the new faith. But for several centuries, both in the East and in the West, the seventh day continued to receive special recognition, even after it had ceased to be kept as a Sabbath; in the East it was kept as a fast, because on that day Christ lay in the sepulchre; in the West it was still kept as a festival.

As it is difficult to determine the exact time when Jewish Christians ceased to rest on the Sabbath, it is also difficult to determine the exact time when Christians generally began to rest on the Sunday. But the origin of the Christian Sunday is very explicable. Our Lord Jesus Christ was not merely a great religious teacher who came into the world to promulgate certain new religious truths. He established a Church. The supernatural life which He communicated to His disciples created a system of supernatural relationships between His disciples themselves as well as

between His disciples and Him. The organisation of a supernatural society was the necessary expression of these relationships. The perfection of Christian strength, wisdom, and joy was not possible to Christian men apart from communion with each other. It was not enough that the solitary soul should be brought into fellowship and union with Christ; it was necessary in a far higher sense than that in which the writer of the Acts of the Apostles used the words that "all that believed" should be "together" and have "all things in common." Free and habitual communion with each other was almost as necessary for the development of the new life as free and habitual communion with God.

But this rendered it necessary that Christian Churches should appoint fixed and frequent times for meeting, and the instincts of Christian men led them to adopt the first day of the week. The most memorable appearances of our Lord to the Apostles after His Resurrection from the dead were on that Day. On that Day the Holy Ghost descended on the Church. These external events confirmed the disposition of the Church to commemorate the Day of Christ's Resurrection by consecrating it to worship. It was felt that the supreme event in the history of the human race was not the Creation but the Resurrection of the Lord. The first was the commencement of the natural life of the race;

the second of its supernatural life. Christian men knew that they had risen with Christ and entered with Him into the kingdom of heaven. Old things had passed away; all things had become new. For them, the most sacred day of the week was not that which commemorated the completion of the old Order but that which commemorated the beginning of the new. The spiritual instinct of the Church determined its duty. According to the ancient prophecy, under the new Covenant the law was to be written on the heart, and as to the heart of the Church, Christ's Resurrection had an infinitely greater interest than the creation of the material universe and seemed a far more glorious manifestation of the power and love of God, the meetings of the Church for worship were fixed on the first day of the week instead of the seventh. Wherever Churches were founded this custom was established. On the first day of the week they met to "break bread" and to offer worship and to receive instruction in Christian truth and duty.

But there is no reason to believe that the Apostles required their converts to keep the first day of the week as a Day of Rest. In the whole of the apostolic epistles there is only one commandment, so far as I know, about the way in which the Sunday was to be observed, and this is a commandment which I am afraid that nine Christian

people out of ten habitually violate both in its letter and its spirit. St. Paul did not tell the Corinthian Christians to do no common work on the Sunday; the commandment which he gave them was one which most of us have forgotten—"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him," that he may have money to devote to purposes of charity and religion. This is the only precept about Sabbath observance in the New Testament.

It is clear that for a long time the Sunday, though part of it was consecrated to worship, was not kept as a day of rest by the Christian Jews, who continued to rest on the seventh day of the week, nor by the Gentile Christians, for they had inherited no weekly Sabbath from their heathen ancestors, and there is no trace of any obligation having been imposed upon them by the Apostles to commemorate the Resurrection of Christ by abstinence from their ordinary occupations. They met for worship before the day's work began, and, perhaps, after the day's work was over.

But as time went on, Christian men came to feel that it would be expedient to secure larger opportunities for Christian communion by protecting one day in the week against the intrusion of common business and care. As the Church grew stronger it became more and more able to do this.

The remembrance of the gracious and beneficent character of the Jewish Sabbath intensified the craving for a similar break in the monotony and weariness of life. In the weekly rest which had passed away with Judaism God had revealed that man was not made merely for exhausting labour; and though the old Sabbath was no longer obligatory, the revelation which it contained was felt to be permanent. In the time of Constantine this craving for rest had become so general that the Emperor was able to promulgate a decree requiring the closing of the courts of law and the suspension of all work on the Sunday. The Emperor, however, or his advisers, felt themselves at liberty to use their own judgment about the extent to which this interruption of common business should be enforced. The Jewish law absolutely forbade all work. If a crop of wheat had been cut on Friday, and when the Sabbath commenced was ready to carry, the Jewish farmer was not permitted to carry it though a thunderstorm might be gathering which was certain to destroy it. In Palestine this restriction inflicted very little inconvenience, as the weather in harvest was uniformly clear and steady, and a storm was so rare as to be regarded as almost preternatural. But it was very different in many of the provinces of the empire, and Constantine, therefore, made a special exception in favour of agriculturists; they were to be

permitted to work on Sunday if they thought it necessary.

Constantine's decree was the first of a series of imperial acts which secluded the first day of the week from ordinary uses, and so the weekly rest was gradually established as a secular as well as a religious institution for all Christendom.

The contrast, as illustrated by this historical review, between the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sunday is very striking.

The Sabbath was originally nothing more than a day of physical Rest. After the Captivity, it was the day on which devout Jews met in their synagogues for worship; but this was because the day was already free from ordinary business. But the Sunday originated in the meetings of the Church for Worship; the Rest was secured afterwards, in order that the Worship might be possible. In the history of the Jewish Sabbath the Rest came first and the Worship followed; in the history of the Christian Sunday, the Worship came first and the Rest followed. To the idea of the Jewish Sabbath, Rest was essential, Worship was an accident; to the idea of the Christian Sunday, Worship is essential and Rest is an accident.

The Rest of the Sabbath was prescribed by a law which made Rest a duty. The law was beneficent and gracious, but still it was a law, and the

consciences of men were "exercised" in determining what the law permitted and what it forbade. The Rest of the Sunday is protected by no law; it has been gradually won as a privilege, and is now to be protected as a right.

The Jewish Sabbath was a Divinely ordained discipline intended to enforce the remembrance of God's creative acts and to check, by an authoritative institution, man's complete absorption in secular business. The Christian Sunday is the expression of the joy of Christian hearts in the Resurrection and Glory of Christ, and of their desire to vindicate their place in the Kingdom of Heaven.

If I were to say anything about the questions of casuistry by which some good people are perplexed in relation to the manner of observing Sunday, it would not be with the intention of discussing them, but to show that they ought never to be raised at all. It is a direct inversion of the whole idea and theory of the Day to ask, What common things may I do upon it and yet be blameless? The true question for every Christian man is; How far is it possible for me to escape from the common cares and common joys of my ordinary life, and how completely can I dwell, for one day in the week at least, in a fairer world than this, breathe a purer air, and rejoice in the light of

a Diviner heaven? The observance of the Sunday as a religious institution is a question of privilege, not of duty.

When we consider the weekly Rest as a social and moral institution, the case is somewhat different. There are innumerable reasons which make it desirable to have a break in the world's business at least one day in seven. Physical health suffers and the vigour of the body declines without it. When in the fierce heat of the first French Revolution it was determined to abolish every trace and memorial of the Christian Faith in France, the revolutionists still felt that it was necessary to provide for a regular interval of Rest, and they therefore appointed a week of ten days with a regularly recurring holiday. After twelve years' experience, they abandoned the week of ten days and returned to the older and more kindly custom of resting one day in seven. The institution is so invaluable to the physical well-being of nations, that to break it down by engaging in unnecessary business, or by unnecessary travelling, or by encouraging exciting public amusements, is not so much a religious as a social offence.

It has its intellectual uses, even though as is too often the case, the day is spent in intellectual idleness. Mere rest renews the vigour of the brain.

It is also a check on that feverish and insane

devotion to secular business which is one of the most serious perils to the moral life of our own country. There are too many people in England on whose gravestones the French epitaph might be written, "He was born a man and died a grocer." Apart altogether from the higher relationships of man, it is for the interest of the nation that tradesmen, manufacturers, and merchants should find the doors of their shops, their works, and their counting-houses, locked and barred against them during one day in seven, and that for twenty-four hours they should be emancipated, by a compulsory law, from the bondage which they love too well, and should be compelled to spend their time with their children and friends.

As a social institution, the Sunday imposes upon us an obligation to keep it as free as possible from ordinary work; but as a religious institution it does not so much impose obligation as offer privilege. The great question we have to ask, in relation to any possible infraction of its religious sanctions, is not, Shall I, by doing this, break a law? but, Shall I, by doing this, miss a blessing? Everything will fall into its right place and every question will receive its true answer, if we once seize the true idea of the Day. It is a Day to rejoice in; a Day not of bondage but of freedom, not of gloom but of gladness; a Day in which

we declare that we are not merely merchants, mechanics, shopkeepers, and lawyers, but men—children of God and heirs of immortality; a Day in which we assert our position as the rulers and lords of the material universe, and refuse to be in thraldom to it, and in which we claim to be the citizens of an invisible and Divine commonwealth. It perpetuates the memory not of our rescue from slavery in Egypt but of a still nobler redemption. It bears witness to the Resurrection of Christ, and to our resurrection with Him—it is "an Easter Day in every week." It reminds us, not of the completion of the Old Creation but of the commencement of the New, in which, at last, the sins and sorrows which have marred and desolated the fair beauty of this world shall be known no more, but in which the glory of God shall be man's inheritance, because in the life of man the life of God shall be perfectly manifested; and in this weekly Rest, which has not been imposed upon us by any external law but has been demanded and won by an inward spiritual instinct, we anticipate the blessedness of the new Heavens and the new earth in which righteousness shall dwell—the everlasting Sabbath of the regenerate and glorified sons of God.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."—EXODUS xx. 12.

THE commonest things in the world are also the strangest; the most familiar are the most perplexing. Of all the mysteries in the universe I hardly know of any which is more wonderful than the kind of relationship existing between all of us and our parents. It is this relationship, indeed, which creates some of the greatest mysteries in the moral constitution of the world. Here am I—conscious of my personal responsibility for my character and my actions. There is nothing in the whole range of my knowledge of which I am more certain than that I am justly held accountable for my habits, my words, and my deeds.

The universal consent of mankind sustains the authority of my conscience, and declares that I—I alone—must be held responsible for whatever evil I commit; and that I am to be praised if I do well. And yet nothing can be plainer than that it is easy

or difficult for me to do well, according as my father and my mother, my grandfather and my grandmother—and I know not how far back I may go—were, or were not, temperate, virtuous, upright, good people. As there is this singular and most mysterious relationship between my moral life and the moral life of my parents, there is a relationship equally intimate between my physical and intellectual life and theirs. My voice, the length and shape of my limbs, my height, the colour of my hair, the strength and clearness of my sight, the soundness of my brain, my muscular vigour, whatever constitutes my weakness or my power, was largely determined for me by what my parents were.

Nor is this all. For years I was dependent upon them for the food and clothing and care, without which I should have died. I was dependent on their wisdom or caprice, on their harshness or kindness, for my happiness; and for what is of very much greater importance than happiness; for all the influences which gave the original direction and form to the development of my character.

The mystery lies here:—I alone am responsible for my actions; the guilt of them is mine; and, excluding for a moment all reference to God, the glory of them is mine. There is an element of personal freedom in me which invests me with all the dignity and peril of having my conduct and

my fate in my own hands. About *that* I have no doubt. And yet I was not asked whether I would come into existence or not. The question was determined for me by my parents. I owe it to them that I exist at all. And I owe to them my physical organisation, the rudiments and limits of my intellectual powers, and the temperament which has so much to do with my moral and physical life.

Some of us, perhaps, are sometimes ready to say, that our birth was a calamity. It is not necessary to endure hunger and cold and physical torture, in order to be driven to the wish that the dangerous gift of existence had never been conferred on us. To many of us, I imagine, who live in pleasant homes, and are surrounded by kind friends, life is sometimes so wearisome, its fairest hopes seem sometimes so completely blighted, its highest purposes so disastrously defeated, the past has left behind such keen regrets and the future is overshadowed with such gloomy fears, that we wish that we had never seen the light.

In that case, however, we should never have had the satisfaction of knowing what evils we had escaped. And it is only in ignoble and unworthy moods that any of us yield to this discontent. To yield to it with a knowledge of the infinite love of God and of the glorious destiny which lies beyond death for all who receive the life that is in

Christ, ought to be impossible. What is there of melancholy and want, of disappointment and pain, which I can endure in this world that is to be compared with the transcendent blessedness I may win in the next? Let my earthly life be extended far beyond the limits of the customary threescore years and ten; let every fresh year bring with it some new sorrow, every fresh month remove some old solace, every day be clouded with the shadow of some real grief, and every night be made wretched with dreams of imaginary woe; let me be homeless and friendless, let me endure want and pain; deprive me of the commonest consolations of life; let me suffer all that I can fear, and lose all that I hope; and yet in God there is a blessedness possible to me hereafter, which must make me regard existence as an infinite blessing. I owe to my parents that life which makes it possible for me to live with God and His angels for ever.

The relationship in which we stand to our parents, a relationship based upon the fact that we owe our existence to them, that we are made in their image, that for so long a time we depend upon them for the actual maintenance of life, and that as the necessary result of all this, and of their greater experience and knowledge of the world, we are completely under their authority during childhood,—this relationship is very naturally

made the highest symbol of our relationship to God Himself.

The parental relationship has perhaps its ultimate ground and root in the very nature of God and in the modes of the Divine existence; it is, perhaps, a revelation to us of some of the great mysteries of the Divine life; but that is a region too remote for us to travel into it just now, and the speculations which it involves are perhaps more subtle than some of you might care to pursue. This elementary truth is obvious to us all, and may assist us in the discharge both of parental and filial duties,—the father is to be the type of God Himself to the child, and the child is to honour the father as the highest human symbol of what God is to us all.

That truth, firmly apprehended, would do very much to assist us on both sides—to assist parents and to assist children—to discharge their duties to each other. There are obvious modifications and limits of the truth, resulting from the infirmity of human nature, but the ultimate *idea* of the relationship between parents and children, is to be found in the relationship between God and all mankind; and this constitutes the moral ground of the command, Honour thy Father and Mother.

I am not sure that it is of very much use attempting to define exactly what is meant by Honouring parents. Where there is the heart to

fulfil the duty, no definition will be necessary; where there is not, no definition will be useful.

It clearly includes, however, respect, love, and obedience as long as childhood and youth continue, and the gradual modification and transformation of those affections and duties into higher forms as manhood and womanhood draw on.

There is a very obvious difficulty meeting us at the very threshold of this subject.

Some young people may say that their parents are not loveable, and that therefore they cannot love them; not wise, and that therefore they cannot respect them; that they are unreasonable, capricious, and selfish, that they have vices of temper and speech, and, perhaps, vices of a still grosser kind, and that therefore it is simply impossible to honour them. I think that there are not a few children in our days who are disposed to take this ground and to maintain as a principle—Our parents have a right to just that measure of respect and affection from us, which they can claim on the ground of their intelligence and worth, no more and no less.

At first sight this looks reasonable enough. There is very much to be said for it. How can I love any one who has very little in her to love, simply because she happens to be my mother? How can I respect any one in whom there is nothing to respect, simply because he happens

to be my father? The movements of the heart and the decisions of the judgment are and must be altogether independent of mere relationship, and are determined by the character and power of the people with whom we have to do.

That looks very philosophical no doubt. But, my philosophic young friend, how would it have fared with *you* if your father and mother had had the same ideas about your claims on them? You want your parents to stand on the same ground as other men and women, and to be loved and respected according to their personal merits, just as if they had no natural relationship to you; what would have happened if they had been equally philosophical and impartial, and if they had given you only as much affection and care as you seemed to deserve or as you claimed on the ground of your helplessness; if, in short, they had justified themselves in ignoring any special obligation to love you and to care for you, beyond the obligation which would have rested on them to love and care for any child that happened to come into their hands?

We were not very loveable—some of us—I suspect when we were children. All of us were not angelically beautiful. To nearly every one but our parents we were, for the most part, I imagine, very uninteresting and, perhaps, very troublesome. But, happily, our fathers and

mothers thought us wonderful. Surprising as it seems to some of us, I have very little doubt that they were under the delusion that we were exceptionally good-looking, and that we were singularly bright and clever. They found a grace in our movements, a music in our voice, a wit in our childish impertinences, which no one but themselves ever discovered. We were nearly all heroes once, and some of us, perhaps, were saints. The honest truth about most of us was, that our faces were very plain, that our intellects were very dull, that our tempers were far from amiable, that we were fretful and selfish. But our parents loved us because we were their own children, and their love transfigured us. We were as ugly as a rain cloud, but the light and glory of their affection shone on us, and to them at least we were clothed with a rainbow. That is the only way by which parents come to endure the care and self-sacrifice and suffering which children bring upon them. There is an instinct in their hearts which makes them lavish affection on the most uninteresting, which blinds them to the greatest weaknesses and the most flagrant faults, which enables them to cling even to the profligate and the scoundrel with a love which will not be thrown off, but becomes sometimes only the more intense as there is less to deserve it.

A mother does not argue that it is possible to

love only the loveable child; a father does not say that his boys and girls can claim from him only what their worth merits; the whole structure of society would fall to pieces if philosophical folly of that sort were alleged in defence of deficiency of paternal affection; and to allege it in defence of the deficiency of *filial* affection is equally perilous. You must love your parents and honour them because they are yours; and the absence of that love and honour should be confessed as a sin.

I find that there is no steady proportion between the real substantial virtues and good sense of parents, and the honour and affection with which their children regard them. It is not the best fathers and mothers whose children care for them most. There are men whose boys and girls idolise them, but who are destitute of all solid claim to respect. They have a way with them which charms and fascinates. Their temperament is generally strongly sympathetic. There are gushes of kindness now and then which intoxicate their children's hearts. Usually they are entertaining talkers, and they give their children many a merry hour by their fun. But there are men of this kind who are absolutely without self-restraint; they drink and are wild when the drink is in them. Not through their misfortune but through their fault, their children are ill-fed, ill-clothed, and ill-

educated. They deny themselves no indulgence for their children's sake; are, in reality, spite of all their good humour, intensely selfish; and sacrifice the happiness and well-being of all who are dependent on them to their vices; but I repeat, that I have known such men whom their children regarded with a passionate affection, and with an admiration which was almost blind to all their sins. On the other hand there are men who simply for their children's sake, spare no labour, refuse to themselves the most innocent pleasures; men who have their tempers and their passions under strong control; who never say a harsh word or do an unjust act; men whose children, as the result of their virtue and prudence, are surrounded in childhood with every comfort, and are educated for an honourable and successful life for whom their children seem to have no affection at all.

I do not mean to say that this is inexplicable. The men who are loved have something in them which is loveable, spite of their vices; and in the men who are not loved there are some grave deficiencies, spite of their virtues.

But what I mean to say is that, by-and-by, some of you will have a very different estimate of your father and mother from that which you have now; and you will see that even where much that is captivating and charming is absent, there

may be a noble and truly heroic devotion to you and to your highest well-being; and the memory of this will make you shed scalding tears that you did not recognise it sooner. Ay, and if you had that true filial affection, which your coldness, or your selfishness, or your vanity stifles and represses, you would see it now.

There are no doubt certain circumstances in our social condition which greatly interfere with the true and ideal relations between children and parents. Here in Birmingham, among a very large proportion of our people, the absolute dependence of a child on his parents often ceases at a very early age. Wages are earned at fifteen or sixteen which make a foolish boy and girl think that they owe almost nothing to their father and mother. They are too young to understand their long arrears of obligation; and as soon as they have the few shillings a week which cover the cost of their food and clothes, they seem to forget that their parents are anything more to them than other people. If there are any of you who are pained by seeing in your own children folly of that sort, take comfort in this, that unless they are thoroughly bad, it will pass by before long; their unnatural conduct is owing partly to the unfortunate but inevitable circumstances which have caused their dependence on you to cease before

the right time. As to the children themselves, I do not know that anything that I can say to them is likely to make them ashamed of their folly. In a few years more they will have sense enough to be astonished at it; for the present it must be borne with.

But there is another aspect of our social condition which is still more serious and which leads to more permanent mischief. You know that during the last seventy or eighty years, there has been a great loosening of the strong and permanent distinctions which once existed between the different classes of society. This change has been brought about very much in consequence of the effect produced in the social condition of nearly all European nations by the great French Revolution. In its immediate political aims the Revolution appeared to be a failure. The Republican organisation of France disappeared after a few stormy and terrible years, and the Empire succeeded. But the spirit of the Revolution was Democratic rather than Republican. It was a violent effort to destroy, not the mere political institutions of France, but its ancient social order. In this effort it was successful, and its success extended far beyond the boundaries of France. Napoleon, even when he had destroyed political liberty, was still "the armed soldier of democracy." The principle of the Revolution, that all careers

should be open to talent, that the accidents of fortune must give place to the indefeasible rights of genius, he adopted as his own. In the middle ages, the chances were a million to one that a man would die in the same position in which he was born. The son of the farm labourer became a farm labourer; the son of a carpenter or a smith became a carpenter or a smith; the son of a merchant became a merchant. The Church was the only democratic institution in Europe. If he became a priest the child of a mechanic might become a prince and receive the homage of nobles and kings.

All this has passed away, if not altogether, yet to such an extent that nothing is more common, especially in great manufacturing towns, than to see men rise in twenty or five-and-twenty years from poverty to considerable wealth. With increased wealth there comes a corresponding change in what is called a man's "social position," a change which is not always for the happiness of those whose triumphs provoke the envy or the admiration of their less successful friends.

The manufacturer who began life in the workshop, but has had the skill and the sagacity necessary to create a large business and build up a considerable fortune, sends his boys to the university, gives his girls not, perhaps, a very good education, but the best he knows how, and at least

it costs him a great deal of money; and these young gentlemen and ladies, who owe all their real culture or artificial refinement to the virtue and energy of their parents, sometimes find that their father and mother are hardly the kind of people with whom it is pleasant to associate. Their grammar is far from being immaculate; they are a little confused about the use of their H's; some of their personal habits are not perfectly elegant; they make the oddest blunders in company, blunders which reveal the obscurity of their origin; and the young people are very apt to give themselves airs and to be a little ashamed of the old folks and to treat them with rudeness and contempt. And yet in many cases every sensible man would infinitely prefer to talk to the father than to the sons, to the mother than to the daughters. With the young people, there is often nothing more than a merely conventional refinement, very excellent in its way, but not worth very much, and they have not even the sense to see how much more real vigour of intellect and character there is in their parents than in themselves. And even when the old people are rather foolish, vulgarly vain of their success, ignorant of everything except the way to make money and to keep it, surely their children, at least, though wiser and more intelligent than they, should loyally cover the follies and weakness of their parents, and

remember where all their own advantages have come from.

And in other ranks of life it is necessary to remember the same duty. There are some of you whose parents were little tradesmen or working-people. They kept you at school long enough to give you a much better education than they received themselves. They could not have done this without great self-denial; they would not have done it if they had not loved you well. For you to turn against them the very advantages which you have derived from their virtuous and sagacious solicitude for your welfare, to take every opportunity of humiliating and annoying them by the display of your superiority, is one of the meanest, most graceless, and most dastardly vices of which human nature can be guilty.

There is one vice or folly of young people condemned by this precept which is common to all progressive conditions of society. The new generation always thinks itself much wiser than the old, and is apt to treat the old contemptuously. Nothing can be more natural than this conviction; nothing, very often, can be more false.

No doubt we are making way in very many directions, although the great conditions of all our progress were achieved for us by ages which have long gone by, and the triumphs of our own time are insignificant compared with the triumphs of

earlier generations. Mr. Disraeli, in that curiously characteristic preface which he has just written to his Collected Novels,* has said some things of which it is very necessary that we should be reminded. He says very justly that the invention of written language was a very much more wonderful thing than the invention of the electric telegraph, and that the original contrivance of some of the commonest conveniences of civilised life, which are now known to every race that is not positively barbarous, was far more remarkable than many of those discoveries which have filled our own age with such unmeasured self-admiration. In our boundless self-conceit we forget that there was splendid genius among people who were ignorant of physical science, and would have been confounded by those applications of scientific discovery with which we are familiar. On the whole I think that it was a considerably greater achievement to write the Platonic dialogues than to invent a steam engine, to construct the Aristotelian Logic than to pierce the Isthmus of Suez. I think that John Milton was at least as wonderful a person as any modern scientific discoverer, and that Shakespeare was something more than the equal of any of the scientific idols of our time. I, at least, would rather have been able to write Comus or Hamlet than see my name attached to

* This sermon was preached in 1870.

the most brilliant paper in the transactions of the Royal Society.

Our fathers and our grandfathers were not all fools. The sun did not begin to shine when you and I came into the world, and though I trust that wisdom will not die with this generation, depend upon it—wisdom was not born with us.

The wonderful ease with which some young people dispose of all the gravest questions which can tax the powers of man, the frankness with which they play the part of Omniscience, the swift decision with which they pronounce on the errors and prejudices, and narrow traditional creeds of their elders are infinitely amusing, and might, perhaps, irritate older people if we did not remember that in our time and when life was fresh with us, we were very much disposed to the same follies. But it is surely probable that men and women who have lived in the world twenty or thirty years longer than yourselves have found out some things worth knowing, of which you know nothing; if you are silly enough to dispense with all their experience, you are tolerably certain to suffer for your pains. Anyhow, if you have any modesty, or any religion, "honour your father and mother" thus far at least,—do not express habitual contempt for what you, perhaps rashly, suppose to be their ignorance and their prejudices, and sometimes entertain the suspicion that if you knew a little

more of the world you might possibly see in them a power and a wisdom which, as yet, you have not the sagacity to discover.

There is a practical difficulty which sometimes occurs—it occurs, indeed, very often among the young people of this Church. How is a religious son or daughter to act towards an irreligious parent?

To answer that question in detail would require a long discourse. Circumstances sometimes make the duty of a child very perplexing. When a father comes home drunk three times a week, violently abuses his daughter who opens the door for him half dead with weariness and fright, curses her, sometimes strikes her, drinks half her wages and nearly all his own, what ought she to do? The principle which determines her duty is clear. The obligation to honour her father is not relaxed. You are not released from a debt because the man to whom you owe it is a drunkard or a profligate; and so irreligion, or even vice in a parent, cannot release a child from filial duty. The application of the principle to particular cases is, I acknowledge, sometimes extremely difficult. Parental cruelty occasionally becomes intolerable. For a child to remain in some houses is to suffer perpetual misery. But the noble and Christian course, as long as your strength is not utterly exhausted, is to manifest the Charity which "en-

dureth all things." If your religion makes you more sensitive to the vices which disgrace the character of your parents, it should also enable you to bear their ill-treatment with more meekness and patience. The consciousness of your own sins should make you more merciful to theirs.

The case of children who have grown up to manhood and womanhood, but who continue to live with their parents, gives rise to another set of difficulties. It does not seem easy for parents to understand that their children have become men and women. It does not seem easy for grown-up children to remember that their parents are their parents still.

This seems clear—I am speaking to the children, not to the parents—the house is not yours but theirs. Yet there are some young men and women who appear to think that they have a right, because they are grown-up, to disregard all their parents' wishes and regulations; to rise at what hour in the morning they like, to invite what company pleases them, and to come home at any hour of the night. I admit that parents ought to give considerable liberty to children when they are children no longer. But how much liberty the children should *take* is altogether another question. While you are dependent upon your parents it is ungracious, and worse than ungracious, to assert independence. The true solution of your difficul-

ties will be found in acting as though you were living in the house of a friend. Show the same consideration to your parents that you would show to the master and mistress of any house in which you happened to be a guest. Doing this, you will claim less freedom than your parents, if they were wise, would give you; but by claiming less than they would wisely give, you will probably obtain more than by claiming all that you might reasonably expect; and, anyhow, you will discharge your filial duty.

Among the Jewish people there were special reasons for cultivating and maintaining reverence for parents. The machinery for the maintenance of public order and for the administration of civil and criminal justice was extremely simple. The national polity rested on the basis of the Family. Parents were virtually mayors and magistrates; their absolute power of putting their children to death was limited by the Mosaic Law, but death was the penalty for the wanton and persevering defiance of parental authority, just as death is the penalty among ourselves for the crime of high treason,—and for similar reasons. Among a people with the social organisation of the Jews, especially in the early periods of their history, the resolute assertion of the authority of the parent was necessary to the security of the State.

In the absence of a rich popular literature and of the complicated institutions of our western life, the transmission of the accumulated knowledge and experience of former ages, the gradual development of civilization, and the maintenance of those moral traditions, which are more powerful in their influence than any written laws, depended far more largely than among ourselves upon the vigour and sagacity with which parents governed and instructed their households. Parents were the religious teachers of their children, and if they neglected their functions, or if their teaching was listened to without due reverence, there was very little to prevent the whole nation from drifting back to heathenism.

These considerations explain the special promise attached to the Fifth Commandment. It depended on the strength of the spirit of filial obedience whether the State should be preserved from disorder. If parental authority came to be generally disregarded, the whole structure of Society would be dissolved. The discharge of filial duty was the condition of the permanence of national existence. "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

But it is still true that a due respect for the judgment and traditions of the Past is necessary for the peace and stability of nations. That nation

will be exposed to continual peril which has no reverence for its ancestors. The political and social institutions which exist among any people are intimately related to their intellectual and moral life, and to the circumstances of their material condition; and as the economical condition of any generation can hardly ever be absolutely unlike the economical condition of the generation which preceded it, as its intellectual and moral life can never be absolutely new, it is always unsafe to make any sudden and fundamental changes in the political and social organisation of the State. The life of nations changes gradually; the reform and modification of national institutions should also be gradual. We ourselves were created by the Past. Intellectually, morally, religiously, we have been formed by its authority and influence; we cannot, even if we would, dissolve our relationship to it, and, therefore, the Institutions under which our fathers lived, must be, within certain limits, the best and safest institutions for ourselves.

We never feel that we can dispense with the experience of former times except in the region of political and religious speculation. We are content to learn from our fathers how to build houses, to cultivate the ground, and to steer ships. For what improvements we are able to make in house-building, agriculture, and navigation we are

grateful; but we know that we have learnt more than we have discovered. If in such things as these we determined to neglect all that the experience of the past has verified and to start afresh for ourselves, we should impoverish our resources, and render all real progress impossible. It is equally foolish to suppose that the Past has nothing to teach us in relation to political wisdom, social organisation, methods of intellectual culture, and religious truth.

True Liberalism does not consist in the incessant attempt to reconstruct from its foundations the political constitution of the State, or to introduce sudden and revolutionary changes into the relations which exist between the various classes of society; but in working patiently and quietly towards a noble ideal of national justice, unity, intelligence, and freedom, by the gradual modification of existing social and political arrangements, and by the wise and persevering use of all those means by which such changes shall be wrought in the life of the nation as shall render a more perfect national organisation at once possible and inevitable. If I thought of the Past with contempt I should think of the Future with despair. Among ourselves, as among the Jews, a just reverence for ancestors is one great condition of the security and permanence of national life.

The promise, as it stands in the Commandment, is a promise of prolonged national stability; St. Paul, slightly changing its form, makes it a promise of long life to individuals. Common experience justifies the change. Apart from any "special providence," reverence in childhood for the authority of parents is usually followed by a virtuous manhood, and a virtuous manhood is likely to be crowned with an honourable old age. Disregard of parental advice, and disobedience to parental authority, commonly lead to a life of vice, misery and shame, and to a premature grave.

There is one consideration which may induce us to obey this Commandment that does not apply to the other nine. The time will probably come when it will be no longer possible for us to obey it. Other moral laws we can continue to keep to the end of our days, but, in the course of nature, our parents usually die before us, and if we are guilty of withholding from them in our youth the honour which they have a right to claim, repentance may come too late.

Nor do any of us understand, before the calamity arrives, how great and how irreparable is our loss when our parents are taken away. Other relationships may be formed, but they cannot altogether fill up the void. If we are successful in life, success loses more than half its joy and triumph if

our parents are not alive to witness it. The happiness of Joseph was not complete till he was able to say to his brethren, "Ye shall tell my *father* of all my glory in Egypt, and all that ye have seen." In our sorrow, and even in our sin, our parents cling to us to the last. Theirs is a love on which we can rely when all other love fails us. While they live, we are always sure that even our worst faults will not wholly deprive us of human affection, and that in our worst miseries—miseries brought upon us by our own folly and sin—we shall not be altogether forsaken by human consolation and sympathy.

But the Divine compassion is still more enduring than theirs, and the Divine love still more magnanimous. We may weary even a father's mercy, and a mother's devotion and forbearance may be at last exhausted, but even then—when we have worn out the constancy of the strongest human affection, and changed the tenderest human love into bitterness—we may still turn with confidence to Him whose "compassions fail not" and whose "mercy endureth for ever." "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not kill."—EXODUS xx. 13.

THE crime forbidden in this Commandment is one on the magnitude of which it is hardly necessary that a Christian preacher should insist. In this country murder is comparatively rare, and, apart from religious motives altogether, we regard it with horror.

It was not always so. It is not so everywhere even now. St. Peter, writing to Christian men, says, "Let none of you suffer as a murderer or as a thief." Among the Jewish people, to whom these commandments were originally given, several generations of slavery, the absence of those traditions which control the life of a people long accustomed to a just and strong government, the fierceness of passion common to half-civilised races, must have made human life very insecure, and it was necessary to give this Commandment a conspicuous place among their laws.

The legislation of Moses—I am referring now to his civil and criminal legislation—was, of course, very imperfect if judged by the circumstances and necessities of a nation like our own.

But all legislation must recognise the habits and traditions of the people for whom it is intended. No system of law, no judicial arrangements, can be pronounced good in the abstract; they are good just in proportion as they secure the firm and prompt and inexpensive administration of justice; and the methods by which this end is to be obtained must vary with the varying conditions of national communities, their social institutions, the number of the population, their intelligence and morality. Our own legal and criminal system, though it may be in many respects much more perfect than that which Moses gave to the Jews, would have been utterly useless to such a race as that which he organised into a nation.

It may appear to us to have been a very extraordinary and monstrous law, that when murder had been committed, the nearest male relative of the murdered man should have been required to pursue the criminal and take his life. We believe that the infliction of legal penalties for crime should belong to appointed officers of justice; although, by the way, we have not carried that principle out so far as to have a public prosecutor. But Moses found this institution already in existence. It was only by some such method as this, that murder could possibly be punished among a race which had not been accustomed to public tribunals, to police, to judges, and to executioners.

In the old patriarchal times, the traditions of which continued to exist among the Jewish people, the responsibility of maintaining the laws which are necessary to the existence of human society even in its simplest form, could not be vested exclusively in any separate class: the nearest male relative was held responsible for avenging the death of his kinsman. This custom Moses did not abolish; he was satisfied with imposing upon it certain salutary limitations and restraints. He established Cities of Refuge to which a man who had killed another might flee, and in which he might be safe, if he had been guilty only of what we call justifiable or accidental homicide and not of murder. With the details of this law I need not trouble you; but there were two or three remarkable provisions in it.

The altar of God itself was to be no sanctuary for a man who was an actual murderer. The awful sanctity which was associated with the immediate presence of the invisible King of the nation, was to be no protection against the penalty of this supreme crime—a principle which might have saved Europe, in comparatively recent times, from great and shameful disorders. The safety of the state, the repression of grave offences—this was the principle of the Mosaic law—must not be imperilled under cover of the sanctity of religion.

There was another remarkable provision in the

Mosaic law. It was the custom among some eastern races to permit the avenger of the crime of murder to accept compensation in money instead of inflicting death on the criminal. The obvious result of this was to give license to the revengeful passions of the rich, while it left the poor exposed to the extreme penalty of their crimes. Moses, therefore, absolutely forbade the taking of satisfaction for the life of a murderer, and insisted that "he shall surely be put to death." This is another principle which might well have been recognised more fully in modern legislation. The recognition of it would make our administration of justice more fair and equal. There are many offences which are punished by a fine, or, in default of payment, by imprisonment. To a rich man the fine is practically no punishment at all; to the poor man it may be a very grave punishment, even if he is able to pay; and if he is not, the alternative of being imprisoned for seven days, fourteen days, or a month, is a penalty out of all proportion to that which is inflicted on the rich for the same offence.

There is a third provision of the Mosaic Law which is worth mentioning, "If an ox gore a man or a woman that they die; then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit. But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not

kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned and *his owner also shall be put to death.*"

Moses, recognising the possibility that the nearest male relative of the person who had been killed by an infuriated ox might shrink from inflicting death on the owner, permitted a pecuniary compensation, the amount of which, except in the case of a slave, was apparently to be determined at the will of the avenger.

But if an ox was known to be vicious, the owner was clearly to be regarded as a murderer; if any one was killed, through his criminal carelessness, he might be put to death; and though it was possible for him to escape the capital penalty, the amount of the compensation to be paid was to be fixed by the relative of the victim. If Moses had to regulate our legislation in reference to railway accidents he would put it on altogether a new basis. If half a dozen people were killed and a score seriously injured through the mail running into a goods train, and Moses found that the engine driver who missed the signal had been on his engine twelve or fourteen hours, or that the pointsman who turned the mail into the goods siding had been kept at his post for, perhaps, a still longer period, I cannot help thinking that managers and directors would stand a chance of having a much sharper punishment than they commonly receive now.

And if criminal carelessness which *might* be fatal to life was punished by Moses with death, I think that fraudulent acts which are certain to injure the health and perhaps the life of the community, would have been punished by him not less severely. He would certainly have approved the sentence under which a few months ago a large farmer, greatly to his own astonishment and the astonishment of his friends, was put in prison for sending diseased meat to market; only I think that the old Jewish legislator would have inflicted a still heavier punishment,—a few years' penal service instead of a month or two's imprisonment. Chemists, who adulterate the drugs on which the rescue of life depends—the rescue of the life not only of ordinary members of the community like ourselves, whom also Moses would have protected, but of men of science, poets, and statesmen, whose death would be a calamity to the nation, and to the world,—would, I think, have been made responsible by him for the death of those who perished through their fault; and if they had not been stoned or hung for murder, which I think would have been possible, a criminal penalty so heavy would have been inflicted on them, and they would have been branded with such infamy, that other evil disposed persons would have feared to repeat the crime.

The methods of this ancient legislation may be

very defective, but I imagine that they were the best possible in the actual circumstances of the Jewish race, and some of its principles might with advantage find their way into our own criminal law.

How it has come to pass that in this country and in most other Christian states, the crime of murder, in its gross and violent form, has become so uncommon, is an inquiry which deserves pursuing.

It is to be ascribed partly, no doubt, to the vigour and equity with which for many generations our criminal law has been administered. Just laws executed fairly and with unrelaxing energy, do very much to educate the moral sense and to form the moral habits of a nation. And yet no laws can maintain their authority unless they are in harmony with national sentiment. Whatever penalties you threaten against crimes, you cannot repress them, if the crimes are sheltered by a popular passion, or if your penalties are not generally recognised as just. A few years ago our tribunals were altogether unable to prevent the shooting of landlords and their agents in Ireland, because vast numbers of the Irish people believed, truly or falsely, that they were suffering great injustice, and every Irish cabin gave shelter to the criminal, and every Irish peasant was in a con

spiracy to protect him from the law. At the beginning of this century it was a capital offence to commit forgery or steal a horse, but hanging men for forgery and for horse-stealing did not stop the crimes; the nation refused to regard these offences as deserving of death.

The ultimate foundation of the security of human life in any country, lies in reverence for man, however that reverence may be produced. Respect for what is called the sacredness of human life requires this as its basis and root. Only as a nation comes to feel that man has something mysterious and infinite about him: something which separates him, by a distance which cannot be measured, from all living creatures in the world besides, will man's life be more sacred than theirs. Wherever, therefore, the wonderful dignity of human nature is not recognised, and just in proportion as it is not recognised, life will be insecure, and murder will be committed whenever passion becomes violent.

Hence in barbarous countries, where nearly all that distinguishes man from the brutes disappears, human life is never sacred, and men are killed without compunction. In countries where the institution of slavery exists—countries where large numbers of men are regarded as the mere property of their owners, living machines for the creation of wealth—not only is the life of the slave

insecure, but there is a general insecurity of life, and crimes of violence are certain to be common. For the same reason such crimes are frequent and will continue to be frequent among the rough and neglected classes of the most civilised states. Elevate them by the influence of religion, or even by the influence of education, make them capable of feeling that there is a greatness in man, which in their ignorance they have not suspected, and you will at once surround human life with new and invisible defences—defences infinitely stronger than the most righteous or terrible penalties of the law. And this reverence for man is the true basis of the Sixth Commandment. It is because man is so great that he must not be killed.

The ultimate principle of the law does not consist in what is commonly called "the sacredness of human life," but in the dignity and greatness of man, who was made in the image of God, and whom it is therefore a kind of sacrilege wantonly to destroy.

What is meant by the common phrase "the sacredness of human life" it is not easy to understand. There are many things which, for me, are more sacred than my life. "The sacredness of life!" My loyalty to Christ is infinitely more sacred. Rather than deny Him, I must surrender myself to the most cruel death. The authority of Truth is more sacred. I must die rather than

abjure a single article of my creed. Honesty is more sacred. Rather than be guilty of the slightest fraud, I myself must perish, and I must see those I love best perish too. The moral, the intellectual, yes, and the physical well being of my fellow men must be more sacred to me than life. The philanthropist whose strength is wasted and who comes to a premature grave through the ardour of his devotion to the wretched and the suffering, is honoured by all men; the scientific man who scorns danger in his enthusiastic investigation of the mysteries of nature and who perishes in his pursuit, is not a criminal but a hero; the physician who at the voice of duty remains among a people stricken with pestilence and dies himself through his fidelity to them,—who condemns him for being indifferent to "the sacredness of life?"—the hearts of all men confess that he is faithful to what is more sacred still. It is not man's life which is sacred but man himself, and if, for the maintenance of the true worth and dignity of man, it is necessary that life should be surrendered, it must be surrendered without shrinking. Man's life, I repeat, is precious only for the sake of what man is, and if the preservation of life requires the sacrifice of all that gives to man his true greatness and glory, there can be no hesitation as to what our choice should be. My life is not so sacred as myself.

The principle which requires me to sacrifice my own life when it cannot be retained without the loss of all that constitutes the honour and greatness of human nature, requires me to consent to the sacrifice of the lives of other men when the same alternative is presented to me. There are objects for which we must choose to die ourselves when it is in our power to live, and there are objects for which we must be willing to surrender other men to death.

There are some persons who, with what I cannot but regard as a rabbinical habit of mind, insist that this Commandment forbids the taking of human life under any circumstances. They argue that the words of the Commandment are plain and unambiguous:—"Thou shalt not kill;"—the law is direct, absolute, peremptory. Is our country invaded by hostile armies, and are we preparing to repel them? They vehemently protest; they incessantly reiterate the Commandment "Thou shalt not kill." Has a murderer been caught red-handed, and is the judge about to pronounce a capital sentence? They tell the judge that he is about to repeat the crime which he condemns, and appeal to the law "Thou shalt not kill."

I remember making speeches of that kind in Debating Societies, I am afraid to say how many years ago—speeches which I hoped were eloquent, and which I felt sure were unanswerable. I sup-

pose that other lads sometimes make speeches of the same sort now.

But if the Commandment is to be interpreted on these rigid and rabbinical principles, if we are to accept Portia's interpretation of Shylock's bond as the model and perfection of exegetical method, we shall be in some difficulty. "Thou shalt not kill:"—does it mean that we are never to put a man to death in any circumstances, to punish any crime, to avert any intolerable evil? Yes, some of you reply, for there is no limitation or exception to the Commandment, expressed or implied. But, in that case, what right have *you* to put a limit to it? Do you tell me that you put no limit? Well then, the Commandment must prevent you from killing an ox, as well as a man; if you must not kill at all, you must not kill a sheep for food, nor poison a mad dog, nor shoot a wild beast. The Commandment does not read "Thou shalt not kill a man," but "Thou shalt not kill." As soon as you put any limitation to it, you must be prepared to listen to those who put a different limitation from your own. By the eternal principles of moral law the life of a murderer may, perhaps, be as justly deprived of the shelter of this precept as the life of a rattlesnake; and it may be as right and as necessary to destroy a hostile army, in order to save the life of a nation, as to shoot down a tiger in order to save the life of an individual man.

That the Commandment was intended to forbid the infliction of capital punishment is inconceivable; the Mosaic Law itself inflicted death for murder, Sabbath-breaking, and the selling of a Jew into slavery. The root of the Commandment lies in the greatness of human nature; man is invested with a supernatural and Divine glory; to maintain the greatness of man it may sometimes be necessary that the murderer, who in his malice or impetuous passion forgets the mystery and wonderfulness of the nature of his victim, should be put to death. Whether in all conceivable conditions of human society the infliction of death for murder is expedient, is a question which I have no occasion to discuss.

That it was expedient and necessary in the condition of the Jewish people, when the Mosaic institutions were established, is certain; and it may be maintained that this tremendous vindication of the sanctity of human nature cannot be dispensed with in any nation which has not reached a high degree of civilisation and morality. Its absolute and unconditional abolition in any condition of society seems hardly practicable. You say, Inflict on the murderer the heaviest possible penalty short of death; imprison him for life, and, without treating him with positive cruelty, subject him to a severe discipline. But, suppose, as sometimes happens, that after he is imprisoned he kills

a jailer, what will you do then? You have already inflicted the heaviest penalty, short of death, for his original offence; you have exhausted your resources of punishment; for the new crime there is no new penalty.

But, dismissing considerations of expediency, a nation may well say,—We believe that man is akin to God, and we will assert the dignity of man by inflicting on Murder a penalty which shall be awful in its unique terror; other offences may be punished by other and inferior sentences; but he who forgets that his fellow man is something more than a brute, shall be swept away into infinite darkness; he has committed an offence which human laws cannot adequately punish; he shall be sent swiftly to account for his crime before a higher and more august tribunal than ours. This is the very argument of the ancient law: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for *in the image of God* made He man.

If I were lecturing on theoretical ethics, I should now proceed to show how the principle of this Commandment justifies governments, on the one hand, in inflicting death for treason and crushing rebellion by force of arms; and, on the other hand, justifies an oppressed and injured nation in resorting to civil war to rid itself of unrighteous and tyrannical rulers; but for us these questions have

happily only an abstract interest, and I pass them by and proceed to another question of a more immediately practical kind.

Does the Commandment absolutely forbid War between nations? The awful tragedy which has filled the heart of Europe with horror during the last three or four months,* will I trust do something, as long as it is vividly remembered—though I am not sure that it will do very much—to make nations and governments resolve, at almost any price, to preserve mankind from a recurrence of calamities so vast, and of such intolerable agonies. The moral influence of a great war on both the victorious and the vanquished, is more terrible than its physical sufferings—more terrible than the famine inflicted on inoffensive peasants and citizens; than the tortures of the wounded; than the dying anguish of the slain; than the desolation of women who are made widows, and of children who become fatherless.

It must be granted that the existence of great armies and navies, whether for attack or defence, is a visible and awful demonstration of the evil passions which still retain their hold on the heart of Christendom. But is it quite certain that armies should, therefore, be disbanded, and ships of war turned into merchantmen? I think not. While crime still exists in this country the police

* This discourse was delivered towards the close of 1870.

are necessary, judges are necessary, gaols are necessary; the existence of all these is a proof that evil passions and evil deeds still disgrace our national life, but while the crimes continue the means of repressing them must not be surrendered. And while nations or their rulers continue capable of still more gigantic crimes than individuals can commit, the means of repressing these too must by a sad necessity be sustained.

Clearly the Commandment was not intended to forbid War. The nation to which it was given had a strict military organization, constituted by the very authority from which the Commandment came. The wars in which it engaged were, many of them, conducted by men who cannot be supposed to have been ignorant of what the Commandment meant. Moses himself prayed to God that the hosts of Israel might be victorious over their enemies.

The principle of the Commandment must again be appealed to. Man is made in the image of God; has received a life which invests him with mysterious greatness, and therefore he must not be killed. But, for the unfolding and development of that life,—for the existence of all those virtues, and the free culture and exercise of all those powers, which constitute the glory of human nature,—it is necessary that nations should exist with their definite territories, their social order,

their systems of Law, their recognised Governments. Man, without the institutions of national life, would cease to be man. He would have no true history. Break up all national organizations, and he must drift back into a condition like that of the brutes. The stability of national institutions is necessary for man to be truly himself, for the development of his intelligence and the formation and exercise of all moral virtues. Hence the greatness which belongs to man himself passes on to the nation, which is indispensable to man's dignity. The nation too, is sacred and inviolable. To defend its soil against invasion, to protect its independence, becomes a duty which cannot be abandoned without exposing to fatal injury that higher life which alone makes us superior to the brutes around us. Wars of ambition, wars of revenge—these are crimes. Wars to avenge a real or fancied insult, or to achieve or maintain political supremacy, are crimes; wars originated to save a dynasty, or prolonged to humiliate a vanquished enemy, are crimes. The Nations—the Governments—which are guilty of them merit the execration of the human race, and will be visited with the righteous judgments of God. But the moral sense of the purest and noblest of mankind has sanctioned and honoured the courage and heroism which repel by force of arms an assault on a nation's integrity, and the

great principle which underlies this Commandment sanctions and honours them too.

The greatness of man is the ultimate principle of the law, and the words of our Lord Himself in giving that new Commandment, by which this is, not repealed, but developed and perfected, clearly rest on that foundation. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause * shall be in danger of the judgment." (Matt. v. 21, 22.) If our Lord had said nothing more, it might have been supposed that He forbade unjustifiable anger, because if the inward passion were repressed the outward crime would be prevented. It is the man who is angry with his brother "without a cause" who is most likely to be guilty of violent offences. Repress causeless anger and there will be very little danger of murder. But our Lord goes on to

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* The Revisers of the New Testament have omitted the words, "without cause;" the omission adds to the force of our Lord's warning. If a man kills another he is "in danger of the judgment" and is put on his defence to show whether the act was murder or justifiable homicide. If he is "angry with his brother" he is also put on his defence to show whether there was sufficient provocation and whether the anger was kept within limits. (Fourth Edition, 1884.)

say, "And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire"—(v. 22.) These words suggest, at once, that the great principle which our Lord is affirming in place of the old external law, is not intended merely or mainly to prevent the infliction of physical injury on our brother. According to our Lord's interpretation of the Commandment, the same principle which forbids us to murder our fellow man forbids us to treat him contemptuously and to refuse to acknowledge his claims to our consideration and respect. We are to remember that he is a man, and that he has a right to our reverence and homage. Whatever his infirmities, whatever his follies, whatever his sins, we are to recognise in him the very image of God. If we do this we shall not be angry with him "without a cause." For who are the people against whom we are guilty of this offence? Our superiors? Our equals? No; they are our children, or our servants. They are persons whose equality with ourselves, by virtue of our common relationship to God, we ignore. Let me truly reverence a man, and though I may sometimes be angry with him, and justly angry, I shall not be angry with him "without a cause." My recognition of his kinship to God will repress hasty judgment, and will lead me to place a charitable interpretation

on ambiguous words and deeds, and I shall be angry with him only if there is perverse folly, which justly provokes my indignation, and sin, which makes it my duty to resist him vehemently. This spirit of reverence will save me from the supercilious contempt and the bitter scorn which our Lord condemns as a violation of the spirit of the Commandment. It will also make me long for the restoration of broken friendship. For what is it that indisposes me to seek reconciliation with an "adversary"? Is it anger merely? Is it not rather the pride which makes us unwilling to make any approaches to the man whom we have wronged? But if when we bring our gift to the altar, we remember that our "brother"—the child of the very God whom we are about to worship—"hath aught against us," we shall feel it to be no undue humiliation to leave our gift before the altar, to seek reconciliation to our brother, and then to come and offer our gift. If we had wronged a prophet or an apostle, our reverence for his sanctity would make it easy for us to acknowledge our offence and to entreat him to forgive and to forget it; and it is because we do not reverence our brethren that we shrink from confessing our fault when we have injured them and asking their forgiveness.

The Commandment "Thou shalt not kill," is a Divine vindication of the greatness and sanctity

of man; and in our Lord's development of the principle which underlies the Commandment this vindication is made complete.

It was an old charge against the Christian faith that it wronged and dishonoured human nature. That charge can hardly be maintained in the presence of the actual tendencies of European thought. In these days it is not to philosophy or to science, but to revelation, that we must look for a recognition and defence of the regal dignity which belongs to us as men. The Christian Church has to maintain not only "the faith once delivered to the saints," but all the nobler hopes and convictions of past ages, against opinions which destroy the mystery and grandeur of our nature. About the issue of that conflict I feel no apprehension. It may be demonstrated that the physical nature of man is only the last and highest form of a long series of developments which may be traced back to the obscurest and most elementary types of life. Link by link of the chain may be verified which associates us with creatures to which we seem least akin, and the gradual unfolding of the rudimentary brain and the rudimentary limbs to their perfect form may be conclusively established. I have nothing to say in reply to those men of remarkable genius, and still more remarkable patience and industry, who tell us that the proof of this theory is nearly complete. As

a matter of sentiment I might wish that the investigations of the professors in this new Herald's College had permitted them to assign me a more illustrious ancestry; but no moral or theological interests dispose me either to contest their theory or to hesitate in accepting it. It must stand or fall by its appropriate evidence.

But if it be said that this scientific history of our physical organization constitutes a theory of human nature, that it explains our position in the universe, that it solves those questions concerning our destiny by which the hearts of the wisest men in all ages have been perplexed, I can only reply that it explains nothing that I am most anxious to understand. My moral life remains a mystery still. My consciousness of moral freedom is unaccounted for. The scientific theory of my origin illustrates my relation to that region of existence which is under the control of natural law; it does not touch those elements of my life from which my personal history derives its deepest significance, and which invest the history of the race with all its tragic and glorious interest. It does not explain the horror with which I regard the crime which this Commandment forbids. It does nothing to illustrate those claims which my conscience recognises in the meanest of mankind, to my reverence and homage. The region of moral freedom belongs to ethics and to theology, not to

science. It is from this region that the greatness of man receives its irresistible demonstration; and while the hearts of men are still softened by penitence and agonised by remorse, while heroic virtue stirs us to an enthusiasm of admiration, and disgraceful vice moves us to indignation and contempt, the old faith in the dignity of human nature cannot be destroyed. Science may prove that, physically, we have sprung from an ignoble parentage; but conscience will still assure us that, morally, we are akin to God.

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery."—EXODUS xx. 14.

THE penalties which were to be inflicted by the Jewish state for the transgression of some of these Commandments are not given in connection with the Commandments themselves. They appear in other parts of the Books of Moses.

The first seven were protected by the heaviest and sternest punishment which human law can inflict. The worship of any other god than Jehovah was punished with death. The worship of any image of Jehovah Himself was punished with death. Blasphemy was punished with death. Sabbath-breaking was punished with death. Determined resistance to the authority of parents, and the flagrant want of reverence for them, were punished with death. Murder was punished with death. Adultery was punished with death.

The first four Commandments assert in various forms the unity, spirituality, and greatness of God; and as the very purpose for which the Jewish state existed was to express and maintain by

external and political institutions certain great truths concerning God and His relations to mankind, it was only in harmony with the genius of Judaism that every violation of these four fundamental laws should be made a capital crime. That the fifth, sixth, and seventh Commandments should have been sustained by the same tremendous sanction, suggests to us the greatness of those Divine ideas which constitute the ultimate ground and reason of every one of them. According to the Divine order, the recognition of parental authority is indispensable to the regular development of human virtue, to the maintenance of the stability of political society, and to the formation of those moral habits, out of which, in the normal condition of man, religious reverence would, in a sense, be naturally developed. The dignity and sanctity of human nature, and the consequent inviolability of human life, are protected by a penalty, not less severe than that which vindicates the majesty of God. And as there is a Divine idea to be fulfilled in the relations between parents and children which makes that relationship sacred—as there is a Divine idea to be fulfilled in the character and history of every individual man which makes man and man's life sacred—so there is a Divine idea to be fulfilled in marriage, in all the offices of mutual love and service which it creates, and in all the happiness

which it renders possible; and therefore marriage is sacred too.

If I refuse to marriage the name of a sacrament, it is not because I deny the sacredness of the institution; but partly to preserve a separate name for Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which are ordinances absolutely peculiar and unique: and partly because the religious mystery, with which that description invests it, appears to me to remove the institution of marriage from the region of human affections and delight, as though that region were unblessed with the light of the Divine presence and approbation.

Marriage, like the family which springs from it and like the state, has, I say, underlying it a Divine idea; and as a rule it is essential to the development of the highest perfection of human nature. To this rule, indeed, there are innumerable exceptions—exceptions, however, which do but reveal the operation of a higher law, which can work out its results independently of all common means and common methods. There have been men and women who in a single life have exhibited a beauty as well as a strength of character which has never been surpassed. Most of us, however, require marriage to redeem us from selfishness, to form us to habits of self-abnegation and self-sacrifice, to develop tenderness of affection, to subdue wilfulness, to teach us the ultimate

and Divine secret which God reveals to angels and to saints, the secret of living not for ourselves but for another. We are to be restored to God's image; this is the great end of our earthly existence; and in this all the institutions of society and the state have their ultimate reason and their religious sanction. The relationship of marriage, beyond all others, unfolds within us that perfect and self-sacrificing love which is the crown of God's perfections; and by the love and care of children, to which the sacredness of marriage is indispensable, we are formed to the image of God's fatherhood. The institution is, therefore, related to the supreme destiny of our race; it has a moral idea for its basis, an idea which is to be found in the special virtues and perfections which it is calculated to develop.

That some men and innumerable women have achieved in a solitary life a perfection not inferior to that which marriage is especially intended to form, is not to be regarded as a proof that the institution has no moral significance and worth. It proves only this, that the soul is not absolutely dependent on any external conditions. There are other aids and influences to assist the growth of virtue and of spiritual strength and grace, besides those on which most of us, according to the Divine organization of human life, have largely to depend.

If for any reason some of us have to live in solitude, these exceptions teach us not to despair of the highest and fairest forms of moral and spiritual excellence. We may make the cares of others our own, though they are not one with us in the most intimate of earthly unions. We may watch over them in their sickness, help them in their poverty, cling to them through their sin, and rejoice with such tears of gladness as angels shed when a sinner is brought to repentance over their return to God. Such ministries of charity—especially necessary, alike for men and women, in the solitary state—may compensate for their loss of the common aids to an unselfish perfection.

It is, however, necessary to assert the nobleness of this institution against two theories which have a very different origin, but both of which appear to deny it.

What has been said and written during the last three hundred years about one of these theories—the theory which lies at the basis of the Romish doctrine of the superior sanctity of celibacy—is tolerably familiar to many of you. The dogma that the religious life in the highest sense is the solitary life is plainly inconsistent with the full and cordial recognition of the Divine idea of Marriage.

There is another theory which seems equally to conflict with that idea. At the bottom of the

agitation for what are called woman's rights there is very much justice, but it is unfortunate that what may be described as the philosophy of the movement has been created by writers and speakers whose system of thought is not controlled by the Christian revelation. Many of the discussions and arguments on this question seem to me to rest on a principle which is closely akin to the Romish doctrine of celibacy.

They appear to imply—what an intelligent Christian thinker must definitely refuse to accept—that the normal idea of woman, and of her rights and duties, is to be determined by considering her simply as an individual, and that, therefore, woman is only her true self when her life has a separate and independent development. The method of those who attempt to unfold a theory on which to rest their protest against the many forms of injustice to which woman is subjected appears to be this: To consider what she has a right to ask for on the hypothesis that she has to work out her destiny apart from the interests and claims of man, and that it is universally true that she may achieve the highest perfection possible to her in the solitary life.

I believe that such a theory of *man* would be utterly false, and that such a theory of woman is utterly false too. We are not *individuals* merely. There are indeed regions of our life in which we

must refuse all human limitations and restraints. There are other regions in which these restraints and limitations, with the duties which arise from them, are necessary both for woman and for man. I shall altogether fail to reach a true idea of man, and of what man's life ought to be, if I think of him as standing apart and alone; I shall altogether fail to reach a true idea of woman, and of what woman's life ought to be, if I think of her as standing apart and alone. In the case of man, I must not attempt to work out an ethical and social system on the hypothesis that, as a rule, he has to live a life of celibacy, and that marriage, with whatever it may involve, is to be treated as having only an accidental and subordinate place in my theory; and in the case of woman, I must not attempt to determine what her education should be, and what forms of employment the customs of society should permit to be open to her, and what should be her relations to municipal and national government, on the hypothesis that, as a rule, she has to live a life of celibacy, and that in her case, marriage, with all that it involves, is a mere parenthetical question. A true idea of the institution of marriage lies very near the foundation of every true philosophy of human life, and affects the whole theory of the rights and duties both of man and of woman and of their relations to each other

A hundred and fifty years ago an attempt was made by Rousseau to construct a social and political theory by commencing with the consideration of man in what was absurdly called a state of nature, that is, as an individual, apart from all social and political relations and previous to the existence of those relations; that attempt, though it fascinated the intellect and imagination of a great part of Europe for a time, brought disaster and misery on those who endeavoured to translate it into practice; and any attempt to construct a theory of the social and political rights of woman on a similar basis, is likely to end in similar confusion and disaster, if any nation should attempt to give it reality and to invest it with the force of law.

But to return to the Commandment. In its form—like most of the other Commandments—it only restrains certain external acts which violate the idea on which the Commandment rests; but it requires for its true and perfect fulfilment the realization of the idea itself. To attempt to trace the institution of marriage to its ultimate root, and so to place it in relation to the eternal laws of the universe and the nature of God, would lead us into remote regions of speculation. It is enough that we should accept and recognise the institution as obviously and necessarily belonging to the moral

order of the world and to the moral development of individual men, and consider what it is in its most perfect form.

For myself, I do not believe that the world has lasted so long, and that through generation after generation men have married and given in marriage, without catching any glimpse of the true idea of the institution. I believe in the wisdom which lies in the old traditions of the race and the natural instincts of the heart. The details of the relationship may have to be re-adjusted in order to bring them into more perfect harmony with that ideal which has only to be presented to the soul in order to be acknowledged as lofty and true, but I have no more belief in the necessity of re-constructing, from its foundations, our conception of what marriage ought to be, than in the necessity of re-constructing our conception of integrity and truth. The institution rests on the possibility of the absolute mutual surrender to each other of man and woman—a surrender in which nothing is reserved but loyalty to God and to those supreme moral duties, which no human relationship can disturb or modify. It rests not only on the possibility of that perfect blending of life and interest—but on the strength and blessedness which come from it. And any theory of marriage which would impair the completeness of the resolution of two individual lives into a

higher though complex unity, is a departure from that ideal which in our highest, noblest, and happiest hours asserts for every one of us its authority and truth.

Marriage is to be the result of a mutual devotion, which from its vehemence, and fervour, and tenderness, has appropriated to itself the name of Love, as though there were no other form of affection which had a right to bear the name. When that passion comes to man or woman, suddenly or gradually, in a moment or as the slow result of months and years of friendship, the soul passes through what—if the term did not already belong, in its most exact sense, to a still higher experience—might be called a second birth. It makes all things new. The soul feels as though only now it had begun to live. Very often it is redeemed at once from intellectual sluggishness; and the moral life reveals itself in nobler and more gracious forms. In its complete surrender of its life to another, the soul becomes conscious, for the first time, of its true self, and discovers unsuspected capacities and powers. The great saying which is vindicated in so many ways becomes true—he that loseth his life finds it. Never sneer at what you call the delusions of young lovers; their fancies are probably much truer than the soberest judgments of men whose hearts have grown prosaic and cold. You think that they are blind to

each other's faults; it may be so, but it is only because their love has made them clear sighted to see in each other not only all actual virtues but all latent possibilities of virtue. It is partly this, which fills those sunny hours with so strange and perfect a joy. The lover may not understand the mystery, but if he did, he would say—I have found at last an ideal beauty and goodness and grace in another, and this, next to the finding of God Himself is the supreme blessedness of the soul; and another has found in me—not what I am now, but something far better—has seen in me my truest and highest self—all the goodness, and nobleness, and power which are mine, not in fact as yet, but according to the idea which ought to be fulfilled in my individual life and character, and so I anticipate the ultimate perfection of my nature; there is one who sees me already transfigured and glorified. Do not tell me that such experiences as these are follies and delusions. Which, after all, is the truest and deepest estimate of a man—that which is based upon his actual imperfections and failures—or that which penetrates through all these and sees only the Divine idea of the man, the glorious strength, and incorruptible truth, and stainless purity, and unselfish devotion, which are possible to him? If the soul is not separated altogether from God, remember that the Divine idea will at last be wrought out,

and the lover's dream will prove truer than the shrewdness of worldly experience. That which is seen in a man is temporal; that which is unseen, or seen only to the heart that loves him, is eternal. So far from regarding this early extravagance of affection, if so it must be called, as a folly to be sneered at, and as resting on delusions which should be got rid of and forgotten as soon as possible, I think that the only pity is that it does not last much longer, and that the romance and poetry of courtship too often disappear as soon as the days of courtship are over. It is in the glow and glory of that young affection that the true idea of marriage is to be found; and the intensity of the love must remain if that idea is to be fulfilled.

It must remain and show itself in the mutual recognition and honour of all that is fairest and noblest which it enabled each to find in the other before marriage. To the husband, the wife should always have more of beauty, and grace, and good sense, and moral worth, than she seems to have to all the world besides. And in the husband, the wife should continue to see a virtue and a strength which all the world besides is unable to recognise. They should continue to sustain to each other that relationship which was originally founded in the discovery by each, of what no one else had ever discovered in the other. If any of you say

that you have married a fool, and cannot help seeing it, I am sorry for you; your confession should make other people careful not to repeat your mistake; but how was it that you did not make the discovery before it was too late? There was a time, I suppose, when what now seems to you folly and stupidity, seemed something very different; and, perhaps, the reason was that your love was stronger then than now. Or you may say that you have found that you have married a man or a woman whose temper is sullen or irritable, or who is coarse, selfish, indolent, and weak; but there was a time—was there not?—when you had eyes to see what fascinated your heart and won all your love? Why has that vision faded? If it remained, it would enable you to overcome the annoyance, perhaps the disgust and contempt, which are eating away, like a canker, all your peace and joy. The mischief is, that too often marriage does not rest on its only true and enduring foundation. Vanity, mere weariness of a solitary life, ambition, what is called prudence, selfishness in a hundred forms, are too often the reasons why men and women bind themselves together in this high and wonderful relationship. They were never transfigured and glorified to each other. There was no such discovery as that which I have spoken of—by the wife of a certain ideal of manhood in the husband—by the husband of a

certain ideal of womanhood in the wife. Mere accident and a passing whim determined the whole question. Fifty other women, fifty other men, would have been equally acceptable. The man thought of little or nothing except getting a house-keeper; the woman of little or nothing except getting a house to keep. From the very first the relationship was profaned. It never had a true root. Young people who see how the lofty idea of the institution is thus degraded in the lives of some whom they may know, should lay to heart the warning which comes from the weariness, vexation, and misery of an unreal marriage, and should determine to achieve the perfection of celibacy rather than be betrayed into a similar fault.

As for those who are already involved in the unhappiness of a relationship founded on an inadequate basis, they should endeavour, even now, to make it a truer and better thing. There is—be sure of it—something in every man and in every woman, which God can love, and He sees in every one possibilities of worth and nobleness, which only a love like His own can discover. You ought to have caught some glimpse of that loveableness, and of those possibilities of goodness and strength, before you were married at all; and your only safety lies in trying to discover them now. Think of your wife, think of your husband, as they appear in their best and highest moments, when

genial influences are upon them which repress their selfishness, their vice, and their folly, and develop all that is wisest, most kindly, and most beautiful in their souls. These are the moments in which their true self is revealed; try to forget all the rest. You do not root up the rose tree in your garden because through the dreary months of winter there is neither beauty upon it nor perfume; you do not despise it because it looks so bare and ungracious; you think of the shining weeks of summer, when it crowns itself with loveliness, and fills the air with sweetness. The life out of which all this springs is in it all the winter through. You have faith in it while it is unseen. Most of us require the same forbearance and the same faith; and the more of it we have—like flowers which need the heat and light to bring out their blossoms—the more fully we are able to manifest the perfection, poor perhaps, at the best, of which our life is capable.

Where there is this mutual recognition of an ideal excellence, and the love which is inseparable from it, everything else will follow which is necessary to a perfect marriage. There will be an habitual suppression on the part of each, of all personal tastes and preferences which conflict with the happiness of the other; there will be no weighing and measuring of the amount of concessions on either side; there will be no thought

of concessions, but a greater delight in the mutual surrender than could come from any assertion of personal rights; both will find it more blessed to give than to receive. In all the details of life it will be plain that each is dearer to the other, than wealth, or honour, or pleasure, or kindred, or friends. There will be nothing even in manner to suggest that to the husband any other woman seems more than his wife—or to the wife that any other man seems more to her than her husband. There will be a certain reserve, not assumed, but natural and inevitable, in the relations of each to all the world, indicating that with no one else can there be the intimacy and freedom which are possible between themselves. There will be, what seems to me absolutely indispensable to the true realization of the strength and happiness of the relationship, perfect mutual trust. I do not mean that the merchant or the tradesman must come home and tell his wife all that has happened in the shop or the counting-house during the day; that the lawyer should talk to her about the affairs of his clients, and the doctor about the symptoms of his patients. Nor do I mean on the other hand that the wife is to be required to explain to her husband every night all the details and difficulties of her household administration. Perfect trust will repress exacting curiosity on both sides. But in everything that really affects their common life,

and in everything that either cares to know concerning the life of the other, excepting of course those professional and business affairs in which a man is the depositary of public or private confidence, there will be the utmost openness on both sides; and in all matters which lie beyond the reach of either, there will be absolute faith in the other.

By such a life will the true idea of marriage which underlies this Commandment be fulfilled, and all peril of violating this particular precept be kept far away. And through a vivid apprehension of this noble ideal on the part of the unmarried, will all approach to kindred sins be shunned and feared.

It is said, I know not with what truth, that among the great and noble of this country there has been some return to those evil habits, which were checked, partly by the increasing influence of religion among the higher classes at the beginning of this century, and partly by the high moral influence of the Queen's court during the years which preceded her seclusion. If it be so, then the ancient privileges and honours of the English aristocracy are threatened by perils more serious than those which they have to fear from the growing strength of democracy.

However this may be, among ourselves—among the people with whom many of you are in constant

association,—there is an amount of sin not suspected by many,—but known to some of us,—which fills me with sadness and dismay. The influence which masters have over the vanity and over the interests of the girls whom they employ, and the power of foremen over the girls in their shops, are used sometimes for the worst purposes. Do any of you masters or foremen who are guilty of these offences, think that your sin will never be known? You are fatally deceived. Suspicion dogs your steps. You betray your guilt, you know not how. It may be hidden for a time, but the chances are innumerable that it will bring you to public shame. It may sleep for months and years, but will wake up, you know not when; and like the Frankenstein of fiction, haunt you with ceaseless terrors and refuse to disappear. It will come across you, perhaps on your marriage morning. Perhaps it will reveal itself when you lie on your death-bed; and, after years of apparently blameless living, make your name and your memory a cause of bitter humiliation to those you love best. Concealed on earth, it cannot be concealed for ever; and, before the Judgment Seat of God, you must answer for your crime.

As for you who are exposed to temptation—repel with hard and cold reserve every freedom and familiarity; however harmless it may seem in the judgment of those about you nothing is harm-

less which betrays a want of respect for womanly dignity. Resent—whatever may be the consequences—resent with bitter contempt, with indignation, with scorn, every equivocal act and every ambiguous word. Whoever may be the offender—your lover, your master, a man honoured for his integrity, honoured for his religious profession, a church member, a church officer—pour upon him a storm of fire, and let his soul, if he has one, be withered up with terror and shame; if it is impossible for you to escape altogether from contact with him, let the remembrance of your anger and horror fill him, whenever he sees you, with humiliation and fear.

There are some symptoms in the general habits and common thoughts of society which seem to me somewhat ominous.

Our literature is free from the coarseness and grossness which once disgraced it, but there are books, and very popular books too, in which, notwithstanding their refinement, a delicate taste recognises a taint which cannot but corrupt the purity of the soul. There is an unwholesome curiosity in some directions about sins of which it were better to know nothing. What is worst of all, some philanthropic people appear to me to regard with sentimental interest and with a sympathetic kindness that enfeebles their hatred of

wickedness, those who make a trade and profession of iniquity. We are almost asked to reverse the traditional judgment of society on those who have fallen. I will never be a party to sheltering *men* who sin from the scorn and condemnation of society; the scorn ought to become infinitely more intense, the condemnation infinitely more heavy: and I will tell them too that unless they repent they will perish everlastingly. But I will never be a party to diminishing the dishonour—the absolute exclusion from all claim to consideration—the stern, relentless repulsion with which *women* have been visited for the same crime until they repent. I utterly reject the palliations which are pleaded for them. I look with dismay upon the disposition to diminish the loathing with which their sin is regarded. They, too, unless they turn from their evil ways, must perish everlastingly.

Nor can I regard with perfect satisfaction the tendency which I think is becoming strong among us, to obliterate the distinctions which lie deep in our nature and which belong to the Divine idea of the human race, between men and women. That these distinctions have been aggravated—or, rather, have been developed in mischievous forms by the institutions and traditions of society, is only too obvious. Women have a clear right to a free development of all the resources of their nature; only I doubt whether there should be any

artificial attempt so to discipline a woman's life as to suppress the distinctions between her life and the life of man. If she wishes to have the political franchise I would not deny it to her. I would open to her most freely the avenues to every profession in which her characteristic powers and genius can have free exercise. Let her be an artist, an author, a physician. The whole world—and not women alone—will be the richer for it. If she has anything to say and can say it, I cannot understand why she should not take her place on the platform ; or why, in the present circumstances of society, she should not speak in the church. There are places of public trust in which she might serve the State.

And yet I am conservative enough to cling to the old idea that the circumstances and conditions of a woman's life should develop those gentler graces and perfections which the rougher, wilder work of the world quite destroys. I do not think that she becomes her true self unless she is surrounded with something of that chivalrous regard and consideration which, I believe, are repudiated by those who are agitating for reform. I may be wrong ; but I cannot help thinking that some shelter from the east wind, and some kindly warmth of temperature, are favourable to the unfolding of her perfect grace and nobleness. Uniformity of outward circumstances and influences

is likely to lead to a dull monotony of character. There are *men* enough in the world already; most of them are too much alike; one gets weary of the sameness among them; and I do not think that the world would be the better or the more cheerful if the women became men too.

But, if it must be so, and if justice requires that society should be re-organised on the theory that equality between man and woman means that they are to live the same life and sustain precisely the same relation to the State; if, instead of the wives and daughters of agricultural labourers being rescued from the necessity of rough labour in the fields, and instead of the wives and daughters of working-men, in towns like this, being liberated from the factory and the workshop, which I am half ashamed to confess, in the presence of those of you who belong to the party of movement and progress, is the dream which I am weak enough to cherish in private,—if, instead of this, the women of *all* classes are to be yoked to that huge and cumbrous machine of commercial and political life which men have hitherto tried to drag almost alone,—and if, as the result of this, there comes, as there must come, a complete change in the relations between the sexes,—if equality of rights means the disappearance of the homage which gentle traditions and the sweet verses of poets and what have seemed to me the better instincts of

the heart have taught men to feel in the presence of women, and the disappearance, too, of that reserve, and tenderness, and ineffable refinement which have hitherto been our ideal of womanhood, —then on the whole, I think, that I am content to have lived before the old order had quite passed away; before the poetry of human life had given place to prose, and all the fair blossoms of fancy and sentiment had fallen from the tree.

I cannot tell—I may be wrong—but it seems to me that womanly grace, and delicacy, and refinement, qualities which must be at least imperilled if all the old distinctions of employment and position are abolished, are among the defences and securities at once of manly and womanly virtue.

But of theories of the world and of human life, we learn, as years go on, to be increasingly distrustful. The race which God loves so well, and into which He Himself, in the person of His Son, has entered, God has in His own keeping. He alone can know the final solutions of the problems by which our age is perplexed, and the forms and circumstances in which our life will clothe itself, when at last His will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. We cannot predict our millennium The blossoms of the Spring-time have but the faintest visions of the Summer's pomp and the wealth of Autumn. Of tne perfect future of our

race on earth as well as of its transcendent blessedness above, we can but say "we know not what we shall be." In our own time, what remains for us, is to fulfil, in the highest and most perfect form, what seems to us to be the Divine ideal of virtue and sanctity; to translate as nearly as we can into the actual circumstances of our condition what appears to us the law of God. Let the morrow take thought for the things of itself; if the work and life of to-day are honest and true, the morrow will bring with it a larger and deeper wisdom and crown our fidelity with nobler results than we dared to hope for.

The re-organization of society has hitherto proceeded not so much under the inspiration and guidance of a far-off theoretical perfection of its external institutions and polity, distinctly present to the intellect of those who have achieved enduring reforms; but rather under the inspiration of courageous loyalty to great principles, for which it was an obvious duty to secure recognition and honour. It is in following this same line, and only in following this line, that I have hope for the future. Men and women alike are children of God, created in His image, heirs of glory, honour, and immortality; for both, the highest end of existence is not to secure in this transient life ease, reputation, distinction, but to be true to the moral instincts of their nature, and to that Divine law of

which those instincts are the voice and the expression. Whatever impairs, in either, an incorruptible fidelity to conscience, or obscures the fair vision of ideal perfection, can claim no Divine sanction, and is perilous to the interests of the race. Only let us not forget that our perfection is to be sought not in isolation but in fellowship, and that we are members one of another. Genius loses its true glory when it shines for itself and not for mankind. Strength becomes tyranny when it forgets to be the servant of weakness. Learning becomes pedantry when it secludes itself from the common life of man, and forgets that its highest function is to make all truth the property of all mankind. And so, whatever may be the characteristic perfection of man and whatever the characteristic perfection of woman, neither will ever be attained, unless both man and woman remember that God made them both, first for Himself, and then for each other.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not steal."—EXODUS xx. 15.

THE principle on which this Commandment rests is obvious. The institution of Property is recognised and sanctioned by the authority of God. If it is a crime to steal, those social arrangements must be right, if not in their details at least in their ultimate principle, which provide that there are some things which a man may call his own, over the use of which he has control, and which the law will not suffer other men to touch.

It must be acknowledged that the sufferings and crimes which are incident to the institution of Property are so grave as sometimes to provoke the inquiry whether, after all, the institution itself can be defended. Selfishness, covetousness, dishonesty, fierce and angry contention, are among the worst vices of which men can be guilty; and it may almost seem as though we might escape from them all by abolishing the rights of Property. Only less serious than the moral evils which are associated with this institution, are the evils of another kind which arise from the unequal distribution of

wealth. Millions of men are scarcely able to obtain for themselves the bare necessaries of existence; a few thousands live in splendour and luxury. One man has a mansion for his home, and surrounds it with a park of five hundred acres; and within a few miles there are a hundred thousand people, living in narrow streets and dismal courts, and in houses so small and mean that health, comfort, and decency are almost destroyed. The remedy seems obvious. Let there be a fair distribution of all the wealth of the nation among all its inhabitants. Land, houses, furniture, food, clothing, books, everything which is necessary to life, or which contributes to happiness—let us divide them all among the whole people; and if the old inequalities begin to re-appear, as they certainly would at the end of a twelvemonth, let us divide again. Let no man have any exclusive right to anything. Destroy the institution of Property, and many of the vices and very much of the wretchedness of the world would disappear.

That, of course, would be the extreme remedy, the kind of remedy which suggests itself to men when they are very young, very ignorant, very enthusiastic, or very miserable. There are other schemes—during the last fifty or sixty years speculative men have invented a large number of schemes—which look less wild and more practicable, for the mere re-adjustment of the rights of

property, in order to redress some of the more obvious evils of existing social arrangements. All of these more moderate schemes recognise, in some form, the necessity of the institution itself; and are therefore, to that extent, in harmony with the principle on which this Commandment rests. Whether any of these communistic proposals are practicable or not, whether it would be possible to establish them without gross injustice, how long any of them would be likely to last, what would be their effect on the production of material wealth, and on the intellectual and moral condition of mankind, are questions of great speculative interest, and, perhaps, some day they may become questions of great practical interest; but they are not raised by this Commandment, which simply recognises and protects the rights of Property in whatever form they may exist among any particular people.

What are the grounds, then, on which the maintenance of these rights, in some form or another, can be defended? Archdeacon Paley in one of the chapters of his Moral Philosophy—a book which is as charming and sagacious in its details as it is mean and false in its fundamental principle—has illustrated some of the advantages of the institution of Property, with his usual clearness and felicity. "It increases," he says, "the produce of the earth. The earth, in climates like

ours, produces little or nothing without cultivation; and none would be willing to cultivate the ground, if others were to be admitted to an equal share of the produce. The same is true of the care of flocks and herds of tame animals. Crabs, and acorns, red-deer, rabbits, game, and fish, are all that we should have to subsist upon, if we trusted to the spontaneous productions of the soil; and it fares not much better with other countries."

He says further that the institution of Property preserves the produce of the earth to maturity. "We may judge," he continues, "of what would be the effects of a community of right to the productions of the earth, from the trifling specimens we see of it at present. A cherry tree in a hedgerow, nuts in a wood, the grass of an unstinted pasture, are seldom of much advantage to anybody, because people do not wait for the proper season of reaping them. Corn, if it were sown, would never ripen; lambs and calves would never grow up to sheep and cows, because the first person that met them would reflect that he had better take them as they are than leave them for another."

The argument seems unanswerable, and it admits of a much larger development than the Archdeacon has given to it. Houses, ships, furniture, clothes, machinery, pictures, statues, books, re-

quire a great amount of labour to produce them; the stimulus to production would be altogether destroyed if after they were produced they belonged to nobody, and if people who had done no work were as free to use them as those by whose self-denial and labour they were produced. No mines would be worked, no fields would be cleared, no waste land would be brought into cultivation, no marshes would be drained, unless the men who did the work had the hope either of owning the Property which they created, or of receiving in some other form compensation for their labour. The material wealth of the world would almost disappear, and the poorest and most wretched would have even less than they have now, if the rights of Property were abolished.

But there are other grounds on which the institution may be defended. The rights of Property are essential not only to the creation and preservation of material wealth, but to the cultivation and development of the nature of man. Apart from those rights, as I have said, all motive and stimulus to labour would disappear. It is only because corn belongs to the farmer, and coal to the mine proprietor, and bread to the baker, and meat to the butcher, it is only because clothes belong to the tailor, and houses to the builder, and because the law protects every one of them in the possession of his property until he is willing to

part with it, that men work in order that they may get coal, and corn, and bread, and meat, and clothes, and house room. The Indian would sit idle in his cabin if the game he hunted did not become his own.

Excessive physical labour is no doubt a great evil; but the evils of indolence are still greater. There are parts of the world where it is hardly necessary for men to work at all in order to get the bare necessaries of life, and the result is a miserable want of physical vigour and a portentous development of vice. We were made to work. It is by work that muscle is created and the whole body kept free from disease. Work as a rule is good for health, and good for morality and happiness too. There are times when through depression of trade large numbers of men in our great manufacturing towns are thrown out of employment; ask them whether they do not become utterly weary of idleness. Apart from the loss of wages and all that that means, the mere loss of employment makes their life a burden to them. Their temper is less kindly. Their blood gets stagnant. Their sleep is no longer healthy and sound. It is by work that the eye is made keen, the hand dexterous, the touch delicate, the arm vigorous, and that the whole physical nature of man is developed and perfected.

For the intellectual development of man, the

institution of Property is not less necessary. It is not by books alone that the intellectual faculties are disciplined and invigorated. The common business of life, the learning of a trade, the conduct of a manufactory, the keeping of a shop, are among the educational processes which develop and strengthen certain powers of the mind.

One of the great difficulties of all who are trying to raise the general condition of mankind is to induce men to think. No exercise is so hard and unwelcome. Most men never think except when they are obliged; and most men rather than think strenuously for an hour would greatly prefer—except for the shame of it—a couple of hours on the treadmill. It is not very often in these days that we ministers venture to preach a sermon which requires much active thought on the part of our congregations; our constant effort is so to state the truth which it is our duty to explain and enforce as to save you the trouble of thinking; but if now and then, once perhaps in three months, we happen to preach a sermon which we had not the time, or did not know how, to make perfectly simple and easy, the majority of our hearers give up listening to us after the first ten minutes, and most of those who listen to the end, think that they have been rather hardly dealt with.

One of the chief ends of education is to provoke and accustom the mind to think, and so to redeem

children from a merely animal life. If a teacher succeeds in doing that, then even though the scholar may have learnt very little that will be what you call "useful" to him in after life, he has done very much. Some of you cannot understand why so many of us think it worth while for our children to learn languages which they will never have to speak, and which very few of them will continue to read when they have left school. You ask what can be the good of all this labour which seems to come to nothing. You might just as well ask what is the good of all the trouble that your little child of eighteen months or two years old expends in running backwards and forwards half the day, tumbling down a dozen times and wearying itself out by its exertion. It fetches nothing, carries nothing, earns no money, and might as well lie still. But the child is learning to walk, getting the mastery of its muscles and strengthening them; and this exertion which for the present seems to end in nothing, is making it possible for the child to use its limbs to practical purpose with ease and even with pleasure in future years. It is more difficult to develop the powers of the mind than to develop the limbs and muscles of the body; and to a man in whom these powers are not developed, thinking is as difficult and troublesome as walking to a man who has seldom stood on his feet. Even after the mind

has become active and vigorous, severe and continuous thinking requires exertion from which many men shrink. I think it was Dr. Johnson who said that he should never have written a book if it had not been for hunger.

Now the institution of Property supplies a most powerful motive to intellectual exertion. We want food, clothing, and a thousand other things; but they belong to people who will not part with them, except for the results of our own work. Inventive genius is stimulated to improve the processes of manufacture; administrative skill is exercised in lessening the cost of production; merchants watch the rise and fall of the markets in remote countries, estimate the effect of good and bad seasons and of political events on the probable price of commodities. There is not a counting house however small, there is not a workshop in a back court, where the business can be carried on without thought. Every retail tradesman, every huckster, every costermonger has to use his brains, more or less, as well as his hands. Painters, sculptors, musicians, surgeons, physicians, architects, journalists, authors, are all induced to qualify themselves for their professions and to work at them, because the existence of the rights of Property requires that if they are to live they must work. And as Archdeacon Paley justly says in the chapter I have already quoted,—and I quote him

again partly for the delight I have in the ease and grace and clearness of his style—"It enables mankind to divide themselves into distinct professions, which is impossible unless a man can exchange the productions of his own art for what he wants from others, and exchange implies property. Much of the advantage of civilised over savage life depends upon this. When a man is, from necessity, his own tailor, tent maker, carpenter, cook, huntsman, and fisherman, it is not probable that he will be expert at any of his callings. Hence the rude habitations, furniture, clothing, and implements of savages; and the tedious length of time which all their operations require." The Archdeacon with what, I suppose, would be called his "practical" turn of mind, thinks mainly of the increased wealth and material comfort which this separation of men into different professions produces; its effect on the development of the intellectual nature of man and of all the resources of human genius, is not less important. The institution of Property secures an amount and variety of intellectual activity for which, perhaps, we have never given it credit.

It has also very important relations to the moral life of man. The whole organisation of the world is intended to discipline our moral nature; and the very variety of the sins to which the existence of Property gives occasion, illustrates the variety of

the virtues which it is intended to exercise. So far as a very large proportion of mankind are concerned it may be said that their fidelity to conscience is tested chiefly by the way in which they act in relation to Property—the way in which they get it, and the way in which they use it.

Their selfishness or their generosity, their truthfulness or their falsehood, their integrity or their dishonesty, their indolence or their industry, their self-restraint or their want of it—are all brought out and intensified by this single institution.

How a man gets Property—and by property of course I mean whatever he can call his own, whether it be much or little,—is one of the surest tests of what he is. If he gets it by fair means and by fair means only, if he resists every temptation to get it illegitimately, the habit of honesty and the love of it are strengthened, and many of the meaner passions and tendencies of his nature are suppressed. Men are under a constant temptation to steal—to get what belongs to others without giving them the return for it which they are led to expect. To break into a house and carry off the plate, to rob a till, to pick a pocket, are very coarse modes of theft. For a clerk to forge a signature to a bill, for a trustee to appropriate and employ for his own purposes the money which has been placed in his keeping, are modes of theft only a little less gross. Whoever gets into his pos-

session what belongs to another man, on false pretences, without giving what he led or permitted that other to expect, is guilty of the same crime, though in a less flagrant form.

If a manufacturer charges you Twenty Pounds for a hundred yards of cloth and sends you only half the quantity, he as really steals Ten Pounds as though he broke open your cash box and took out a Ten Pound note. If he engages to send you cloth of a certain quality and charges you for it, and then sends you cloth which is worth in the market only two-thirds the price, he is just as much a thief as though he stood behind you in a crowd and robbed you of your purse. No one disputes this. The same principle holds in every business transaction. To give short weight or short measure, is to steal. To supply an article of inferior quality to that which it is understood that the buyer expects, is to steal. To take a Government contract and send to Weedon or Portsmouth articles which you know will be worthless, or which you know are of a worse kind than it was understood that you would furnish, is to steal. To take advantage of your superior knowledge in order to pass off on any man articles for which he would never give the price that he pays for them but for his confidence in your integrity, is to steal. To start a company and to induce people to take shares in it by false representations of the amount

of the subscribed capital and of its probable success, is to steal. But during the last ten or fifteen years so much has been said and written about commercial immorality, that one has become weary of speaking of it.

There is a very common reply to what is said in reference to the dishonesties of retail trade, to which I cannot attach much value. It is urged that the trickeries to which tradesmen are driven, are really chargeable on the public, who will not give a fair price for what they buy; and that if people will insist on having things cheap they must take the consequences; tradesmen must live, and they cannot live if they are to sell the articles, which their customers expect, at the inadequate price which they are willing to give. The answer is obvious. People generally cannot know the cost of producing everything they purchase. A boot-maker may know what good boots can be made for; a grocer may know the lowest price at which tea and sugar can be sold, and yet give a fair profit to the seller; a printer may know the lowest figure at which a book can be produced, so as to cover the cost of the paper and the printing; but the public cannot know these things. They naturally go where they think that they can get what they want cheapest; and I suppose that if people generally acted on any other principle it would check improvements in the processes of manu-

facture, by which the cost of production is diminished, and would lessen the inducements to the economical organisation of business which enables a tradesman to sell at a lower price than his rivals, and yet to clear the same profit. For people to purchase goods which they know cannot be honestly sold at the price which they give for them, is precisely the same crime as the keepers of a thieves' receiving house are guilty of,—who take what is brought them and ask no questions. But for the most part we cannot know what is the price which will give the producer of the raw material, the manufacturer, and the retailer, a fair profit for their work. We must take for granted that the price which a tradesman asks is the price which will cover the real cost of what we buy, and make it worth while for him to carry on his trade.

I am inclined to think, however, that retail tradesmen have probably been very hardly dealt with in much of the criticism which they have recently had to bear. I should indignantly deny the possibility of dishonesty on the part of very many of them whom I personally know, and who are as just and honourable as any men that breathe; if they are able to conduct their business, and to live out of it, without resorting to the evil practices which are sometimes spoken of as though they were universal, there is plainly no reason why

other men in the same business should not be honest too. To fling out indiscriminate charges of dishonesty against a whole class is to encourage the belief that their very position renders honesty impossible. That belief is utterly false; it must be firmly and vehemently denied, or else weak men will justify themselves in yielding to temptation, by the plea that they are but following the common and recognised and inevitable practices of their trade.

There is a kind of theft which has received less attention than that which has been recklessly, and indiscriminately, and unjustly charged upon tradesmen. We sell our labour and service to each other, as well as the products of our labour. A workman sells his labour to his master; a shop-assistant sells his services to his employer; a domestic servant sells her services to her mistress. In some cases the time which is sold is definitely fixed; in others, the contract from the very nature of the case is extremely indefinite. There is just as much possibility of dishonesty in the sale of labour and service as in the sale of anything else. If a workman, who is paid to work ten hours, takes advantage of the absence of the master or foreman to smoke a pipe and read the newspaper for one hour out of the ten, he steals one tenth of his day's wages. He does the very thing that

a shopkeeper would do who gave him fourteen ounces of butter or sugar instead of a pound, or nine yards of calico when the bill charged ten. An assistant in a shop, who, instead of caring for his master's interests as if they were his own, puts no heart into his work, exercises no ingenuity, treats customers carelessly instead of courteously, and so diminishes the chances of their coming again,—gets his salary on false pretences, does not give the kind of service which he knows his employer expects, and which he would expect if he were an employer himself. He cannot but know that his services are not worth half what they would be if he did his best; instead of earning the thirty or forty pounds a year, for which he is engaged, he does not earn more than fifteen pounds or twenty pounds,—and he practically steals the rest. The same principle holds in respect to domestic servants. The understanding is that they should be as careful about what belongs to their mistress, when her eye is not upon them as when it is, that they should do their work as thoroughly behind her back as when she is present, that they should do their best always; and if they are careless, indolent, and wasteful—then they do not give what they are paid to give, and this is very much like stealing.

But it is impossible to pursue into detail all the

duties, or all the sins to which the institution of Property gives rise. To grasp a principle is of more real practical use than to remember a precept. And the principle which would guide us safely through all the difficulties which may appear to surround this subject is that Property is a Divine institution; and that it exists to increase the material wealth of mankind, to develop the intellect, and to exercise innumerable virtues. The laws of nations should be brought into harmony with that fundamental idea, and the customs of business, and the habits of individual men. No Acts of Parliament or courts of justice, nor the opinion of society, can determine for a Christian man how Property is to be acquired or how it is to be employed. He is under a higher law. He has to try, as far as he is concerned, to get God's will, in relation to Property, done on earth even as it is done in relation to other things in Heaven. That the institution imposes upon all men the duty of industry in their callings, the duty of maintaining independence, the duty of avoiding any, even the least, invasion of the rights of others, the duty of self-restraint in expenditure, as well as of honesty in acquisition, is obvious.

That the institution rests on a Divine idea involves other duties too. The use of the power which is inseparable from the possession of Property is to be determined, not by human, but by

Divine laws. To use it for the oppression of the consciences of men, for the violation of their moral freedom, must be plainly a contradiction of the Divine purpose. The rough and imperfect regulations of human governments may be unable to repress and punish the crime, but it will be punished by a more august tribunal than administers the laws of nations, and with sterner penalties than those laws can inflict. When the "rights of Property" are perverted to expel a man from a farm and to condemn him to ruin because his political opinions are not the same as his landlord's; when the settlements of a great property are so drawn as to make leases void if a tenant permits a Nonconformist service to be celebrated in the buildings he has erected; when a duke, who owns a whole county, uses his power to exclude strangers from the sight of noble and beautiful scenery; the Divine idea of property is outraged; and if this abuse of its rights cannot be avenged by human laws, I repeat that it will be avenged by laws more awful in their majesty and more terrible in their might.

If Property is a Divine institution, founded on a Divine idea, protected by Divine sanctions, then in the use of it God should be remembered, and those whom God has entrusted to our pity and our care.

In the actual constitution of society, perhaps in every possible constitution of society, it is inevitable that Property should be most unequally distributed. It is not always the least deserving who are the least fortunate; some of the noblest men have been the poorest. The rights of Property were never intended to carry the moral right to refuse assistance to the miserable and destitute. It is one of their incidental moral advantages that they render it possible to manifest in a thousand beautiful and gracious forms the spirit of Charity; if an inferior law did not secure to me the absolute control of the material wealth which I have created or have been fortunate enough to inherit, I should be unable to show my allegiance to that higher law which requires me voluntarily to relieve the sufferings of other men.

Nor is it in the relief of poverty alone that I am bound to recognise the obligations of Charity. There are a thousand good works which appeal to me for sympathy and have a moral right to demand my aid. Definite provision should be made for discharging the duties of Charity as well as for meeting the inexorable demands of Justice. In the old Jewish times every seventh day was alienated from common uses by the authority of a positive law, and a positive law required the Jew to devote at least a tenth of his property to sacred purposes. These external obli-

gations have passed away. But if we did not protect one day in seven from the intrusion of secular business we should have no secure opportunity for public worship, and for protracted meditation on the glory and goodness of God. If we gave to these duties only the time that we were able to "spare," if in the arrangements of our life we did not definitely reserve Sunday for purposes of religion, we should probably find that the imperious claims of secular business would hardly ever permit us to be present at public worship, and the time that we devote to solitary communion with God, already too contracted, would become more contracted still. Now that the old law which required the separation of a definite portion of our Time from common business has become obsolete, we are a law to ourselves. It is equally expedient, equally necessary, to redeem and to protect a definite portion of our Property for the service of God and the poor. If we give only what we can "spare," we shall be able to give very little. The old law in relation to the Sabbath, though no longer obligatory, has re-appeared in a nobler and higher form in the free consecration of one day in seven to the special service of God; the consecrated day is essential to the maintenance of the spirit of devotion. Until the old law in relation to tithes, which is also no longer obligatory, is re-established by the free operation of the affections

of the Christian heart, there will be no adequate security for the maintenance of the spirit and the discharge of the duties of Christian Charity

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. — EXODUS xx. 16.

THIS Commandment is not to be restricted to false testimony given in courts of justice. It prohibits slander, calumny, misrepresentation at any time, in any circumstances. On the other hand, we shall miss the moral significance of the Commandment if we regard it as a prohibition of lying in general. It is a specific kind of falsehood which is forbidden—"false witness against our neighbour."

The Ten Commandments were not intended to constitute a complete code of morals. There are many sins which they do not condemn, and there are many virtues which they do not enforce. The symmetrical completeness of human systems of ethics is not to be found either in the Old Testament or the New; and certainly we have no right to expect that these laws, given to a race which must have suffered the gravest moral injury from protracted slavery to a heathen nation, should cover the whole ground of moral duty.

It is true, indeed, that lying of every kind is one of the very worst sins of which men can be guilty. Crimes of violence and of passion, and crimes against property, may in their immediate results be more injurious to society, and may justly be visited with heavier penalties, but even these offences may be less ominous as symptoms of a man's moral character than lying. Lying is sometimes malicious; it is always cowardly; and the old instinct was true which identified manly courage with virtue; for a want of moral courage is in some respects worse than many individual vices, just as constitutional debility is more dangerous to life and less curable than fever, or rheumatism, or other specific forms of disease.

But just as the Seventh Commandment does not forbid sensual sin in general but only a particular form of sensual sin; so the Ninth Commandment does not forbid lying in general but only a particular form of lying.

On what grounds then does the Commandment fasten on this particular kind of falsehood, instead of condemning falsehood of every kind? It may be suggested that the bearing of false witness against our neighbour is the most frequent and the most injurious form of falsehood; that the sin of bearing false witness in favour of others is not so common and not so mischievous; and that lying to our own advantage is a sin which if it does not

cure itself—for nothing is more monstrous than the theory that any sin can cure itself—will soon cease to have any effect; men will listen to lying of that kind, at first with incredulity, and then with contemptuous unbelief.

It is, however, a mistake to suppose that the sins forbidden in these ten Commandments are forbidden chiefly because they are more mischievous than others which are left uncondemned. These Commandments are part of a Divine revelation by which the moral and spiritual nature of the Jewish people was to be developed and disciplined. Their reason is not to be found in those maxims of expediency which may determine the course of human legislation, but in certain great Divine ideas, the recognition of which is necessary to the true life of nations and of individual men. The particular precept—in every case—is intended not so much to enforce a specific duty, or to prevent a specific act of sin, as to train the conscience and heart of the people to recognise and honour the principle on which the duty rests or which the sin violates. Murder is forbidden not merely because it injures the victim, but also in order to train the people to the acknowledgment of the sanctity and dignity of human nature. Adultery is forbidden not merely because of the misery and shame which come from it, but also to vindicate the sanctity of marriage. And since a particular form of lying

is forbidden we may be certain that there is some other reason for this besides the harm which the particular offence inflicts on individuals.

The crime which this Commandment condemns is, as I have said, the bearing of false witness against our neighbour, whether in public or in private, in courts of justice or in the common intercourse of society.

But its very terms suggest the idea of a tribunal —an authority—with power to censure or to punish the offences upon which it is called to pronounce judgment, and I think that we shall do well to keep this idea distinctly before us. I find in this Commandment, therefore, first of all, a recognition of those tribunals which are necessary to the peace and to the very existence of the State. I am a liberal, as most of you know, in politics; and have a very strong faith in the old liberal principles that the rights and interests of a nation are safest when it has a firm control over its rulers, and that the great end of government is to enable people to govern themselves. There is a sense, no doubt, in which the power of kings, and parliaments, and magistrates is derived from the will and consent of the people; but while this is true in relation to the particular individuals who are entrusted with power, and the terms on which their power is exercised, it is not true in relation

to legislative, administrative, and judicial power itself. Governments exist by virtue of the Divine constitution of the world. As society—according to the Divine order—is necessary for the perfect development of human nature, and for the ends of man's creation, so according to the same Divine order Government is necessary, without which society is impossible. If Government exists by the will of God, then the powers which are necessary for the maintenance of Government are sustained by the will of God. The power of making laws, of levying taxes, of appointing judges, of inflicting penalties for crime, of deciding differences between individuals as to the rights of property, of repressing violence, of providing for the defence of the country by armies and navies, and whatever other powers are necessary to preserve the integrity, the peace and security of the State, and to protect individuals against being injured by the violence, the fraud, or the carelessness and neglect of others, do not rest on any explicit or implied "social contract," between the Government and the nation, or upon ancient custom and consent; their ultimate foundation is to be found in the Divine constitution of the world. There are times of national confusion and peril, when the powers which belong to Government may be justly exercised by men who have neither inherited their authority under any law of succession, nor been

appointed to it by any of the common methods by which nations elect their rulers. The circumstances of their position may determine their right to rule, and the duty of a nation to obey. Not only what are sometimes called legitimate Governments, which claim to govern on the ground of hereditary right, not only constitutional Governments, but Governments which have sprung into existence no one can tell how, composed of men whose only claim rests on the necessity of acknowledging their authority if public order is to be preserved, and if great national perils are to be averted, are among "the powers which be" and which are "ordained of God."

In our own country, happily, there has been no dispute for many generations as to the right of the Government to exercise all the authority necessary to the defence and preservation of society. We and our fathers have lived under a constitution consecrated by the traditions of centuries, having its foundations in the affections, the confidence, and customs of the nation, modified and improved from time to time by the sagacity of statesmen and in conformity with the experience and the demands of the people. The succession of our sovereigns has been uncontested, and as a rule our kings have been as loyal to the constitution as the people themselves have been to the throne. Laws have been enacted by the free

consent of Parliaments, which have gradually come to represent nearly all classes in the state, and they have been administered by judges whose incorruptible integrity is the admiration of the world. We may be far enough as yet from having a perfect political organisation, our legislation may still require amendment, some institutions and customs defended by public law may seem to many of us unjust and oppressive, but by all the titles on which a Government can rest its claims to the free and hearty submission and support of a people, the British Government can appeal to all ranks and conditions of men in this country.

In these circumstances it is most obvious and certain that its authority is sustained not merely by the overwhelming material force at its command; "Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." "Ye must needs be subject not only for wrath but also for conscience' sake."

And when you stand before any of its tribunals to bear witness for or against any of your fellow citizens, you are bound to remember that the judge or the magistrate is not only invested with the dignity which the nation confers, but that he is fulfilling a function which, according to God's own idea of the order of the world, is necessary to the peace and security of society. Equivocation, falsehood, concealment of what you are required and expected to tell, is a crime not against men

merely but against Him from whom judges and rulers derive their power. You do not lie unto men merely but unto God. The judge is "a minister of God—a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil," and when by false witness you endeavour to turn aside the penalties which he is commissioned to inflict on the criminal, or to involve the innocent in undeserved condemnation, you are attempting to defeat the ends of a Divine appointment and to deceive the representative, not merely of human laws, but of the Justice of God by which the world is governed.

It is not, however, before courts of justice alone that we "bear witness" for or against our neighbour; and this Commandment, which forbids us to bear false witness at any time or in any circumstances, recognises, I think, the existence and authority of another tribunal whose sentences are less formal but hardly less serious in their effect on the honour and happiness of men. The crime of misleading juries, judges, and magistrates is universally condemned. But there are very few of us who are ever brought to the bar of a police court or who have to plead "guilty or not guilty" at the Assizes. There are none of us who are not being judged from day to day by the people about us, by our friends, and by our enemies. We have as much right to a just sentence from them as from a

Judge on the Bench; and there are some men on whose character, principles, and public services—not their neighbours alone, their families, their acquaintances—but great communities are called upon to pronounce. However wide or however contracted may be the circle by which a man is judged, he has a right to claim that no false witness shall be borne against him through which he may have to suffer an unjust sentence. Whether the favourable or adverse decision is to be given by our shopmates, or by the people with whom we do business, or by the neighbours that live in the same court or street with ourselves, or by the friends with whom we have been accustomed to dine, or by the men with whom we have worked in the advocacy of great principles or in the public service, or by the burgesses of a town, or by the whole nation, we have every one of us—from the most illustrious statesman in the country down to the obscurest labouring man—a right to demand that before the tribunal of what to every one of us is Public Opinion, no false witness shall be either maliciously or carelessly given. The proceedings before this tribunal are often very irregular and sometimes very tumultuous; its decisions are often uncertain and sometimes inconsistent; but these decisions are not the less grave, nor is it the less necessary that all whose testimony goes to shape them should speak as on their oath. The penalties

which the Court of Public Opinion is able to inflict on those who are brought up for judgment are not executed by the gaoler or the hangman, nor can they affect the life or even the liberty of those on whom it pronounces an adverse sentence; but it can destroy their peace of heart, the comfort of their homes, their reputation and their usefulness; it can rob them of their friends and ruin their fortunes, and blast all the joys of life—all except the highest, which are safe alike from the violence, the treachery, the carelessness, and the malice of mankind—the joys which arise from the approval of conscience, from communion with God, and from the hope of immortality.

It may be thought that our true wisdom is to defy and to despise the opinion of Society,—that the judgment of other men on our actions rests often on such imperfect knowledge, is so often determined by mistake and misapprehension, is so often invalidated by prejudice and passion, that our only safety lies in regarding it with cynical and contemptuous indifference.

It is one of the great perils which beset all who are engaged, to any extent, in public life, that they come to be so hardened against misrepresentation that they are almost insensible even to just criticism. Indignation at the reckless and unscrupulous statements into which our opponents are so often betrayed, in the excitement of politi-

cal, municipal, and especially ecclesiastical contests, often ends in making us not only absolutely careless about what they say of us, but in making us unconscious of the very slightest pain when, either through judging us on false principles or through an imperfect acquaintance with facts, they regard our course with the strongest moral disapprobation. We are in danger of being amused rather than troubled even when good men loudly proclaim that we are the enemies of the truths which are dearer to us than life, that we are destroying the foundations of national morality that we are provoking men to deeds of violence, that we are doing our best to undermine and to ruin the Christian faith of our country. The danger is that public life so accustoms us to such charges as these, that they cease to give us a moment's discomfort; we become so indifferent to them that they do not even provoke anger: they produce less impression than the shadow of a passing cloud on the sea.

Now, I am quite sure that this is not the spirit which a Christian ought to cherish. Just in proportion as a man is filled with the spirit of Christ will it be impossible for him to regard with scornful indifference the judgment of other men. We may despise the opinions formed of us by those whom we do not love, but if we love all men as Christ means us to love them, if we recognise in

all men the shining of that inner light which, however it may be darkened and obscured, is never wholly extinguished, except, perhaps, in the case of those who are altogether depraved, we cannot help being pained by their ill opinion of us, though we may be obliged firmly and sometimes passionately to resist what we believe to be their injustice, and though we must refuse to turn a hair's breadth from what seems to us the line of duty, to avert their censure and their anger.

We ourselves shall not become the more careful in bearing witness concerning our neighbours, if we despise the tribunal, of what to every one of them is Public Opinion, before which our testimony is given and whose decisions our testimony is intended to affect.

In this Commandment there is, I say, a Divine recognition of the importance of the moral judgments which men pronounce on each other, the judgments which individual men form on other men, as the result of the testimony to which they have listened whether it was true or false, the judgments which large classes of men, or whole communities form on individuals, and which constitute what we call the opinion of Society concerning them.

Nor is it in this Commandment alone, that we find proof of the great part which God intends the moral judgments of other men to play in the moral

life of every one of us. It is a fact, recognised by every school of ethical philosophy, that the conscience of man is formed partly by his circumstances and the moral atmosphere which surrounds him. This does not mean that our moral convictions are absolutely determined by external influences, and that the distinction between right and wrong, is therefore purely accidental. The kind of cultivation which a flower receives, the nature of the soil in which it is planted, the amount of heat and moisture by which its inner life is stimulated, have a very great effect on its growth, determine the size of its leaves, the tint, and, to some extent, even the form of its blossom; but a rose, however you cultivate it, remains a rose. It does not depend on the accident of culture whether a particular tree shall bear fuchsias or red currants; if it bears at all, it will bear a particular kind of flower or a particular kind of fruit. And so there are limits beyond which external influences cannot determine what the moral convictions of men shall be; no circumstances could lead a man to call every vice virtuous, and every virtue vicious. But the degree to which a man's moral perceptions shall become true and clear and just does depend upon the moral influences which surround him; and these influences may in some cases appear to suppress the growth of his moral life altogether; you cannot change a rose into a pear tree by cultivation, but

you may by cultivation, or the want of it, prevent the rose from blossoming at all.

Now one of the chief influences by which the moral principles of men are formed is the current opinion of the Society in which they live. That is a divine law. Let a man be born among thieves, and live among them, and it is very likely that, whatever else he may regard as wrong, he will regard thieving as a very proper way of earning a livelihood. Let a man be born among people and live among them, who think that it is right to use the material power of the State to suppress false religious beliefs, and he is likely to think that whoever puts a heretic to death "doeth God service." I have very little doubt that to many electors in corrupt boroughs, such as Yarmouth and Bridgewater, it seems just as fair and honourable a thing to sell a vote as to sell a horse or a house.

A right and pure public opinion is therefore of the greatest importance to the moral life of every individual man. None of us can help being influenced by it. If it is unsound it must injure us. just as foul air injures our physical health ; if it is just and pure it must do us good, just as the air of the mountains inspires us with new life and vigour,

But the general moral opinions of Society are made up very largely of its judgments on individual men and on the men who represent particular political or religious parties ; just as English

law has been created, not merely by general Acts of Parliament, but by the decisions of the judges in individual cases. The splendour and romance which have been thrown around the lives of great generals have created the conviction among innumerable men that the profession of arms is the noblest of professions. The enthusiastic admiration of the English people for Nelson has made thousands of English boys believe that there is no glory comparable to that of serving in the English navy and sinking the ship of a Frenchman.

The false witness which was borne against the Puritans by the profligate wits of the court of Charles II., produced in the mind of this country a strong antagonism to the great principles for which the Puritans contended. The calumnies which, during the first two centuries, were flung at the Christians, made many upright heathen believe that Christianity itself was an execrable superstition. Slander a clergyman and you help to make the principle of an Established Church odious, and you try to win the cause of ecclesiastical freedom before the tribunal of Public Opinion by "false witness" against your neighbour. Slander a Nonconformist and you help to make Nonconformity odious, and you try by "false witness" against your neighbour to induce the tribunal of Public Opinion to pronounce in favour of religious establishments. Pick up and circulate any scandal you

may happen to hear—no matter how untrustworthy the authority for it—to the dishonour of a religious man, and you do what lies in your power to create a conviction in the public mind that all religious men are hypocrites, and that religion itself is an imposture. It is by the opinion which Society forms on individuals that its general opinions on all questions, moral, religious, and political, are to a very large extent created; and to bear "false witness" either for or against any man is to attempt to deceive and to mislead that great Tribunal—whose decisions affect not merely the happiness and the reputation of particular men, but the formation of the conscience and the judgment of the whole nation.

I will not dwell on the keen and agonising suffering which some sensitive people endure through the careless or malicious gossip of their acquaintances and neighbours; on the broken friendships, the destruction of confidence and the creation of jealousy between husbands and wives, the ruin of domestic peace, brought about not merely by wilful lying but by the idlest and most thoughtless misrepresentation. These things are sufficiently common to make every one who is not absolutely inhuman careful to avoid the reckless slanders by which such misery may be inflicted.

To illustrate in detail the ways in which we may avoid bearing false witness against our neighbour,

is, perhaps, hardly necessary. If we have an honest desire not to commit the sin we shall be in no great danger of committing it. There are, however, two or three very obvious and commonplace suggestions which seem to me worth consideration.

(1) We should try to form a true and just judgment of other people before we say anything against them. A witness ought to be sure of the facts to which he bears testimony. In forming our judgment of others we should remember how often our actions have been misinterpreted, and we ourselves misjudged; how often our most innocent words have been misunderstood or ingeniously perverted; and we should be careful not to inflict on others the wrong of which we ourselves indignantly complained. We have no right to strain their words to their disadvantage, nor to catch at any unfortunate expression which slipped from them accidentally, nor to ascribe their actions to the worst possible motive. If any reasonable hypothesis will relieve their conduct from blame they ought to receive the benefit of it.

(2) We have no right to give our mere inferences from what we know about the conduct or principles of others as though they were facts. From the direction which we saw a man taking we might conclude that he was going to a certain house; but we have no right to say that he went there if we did not see him go in. We may be unable to

understand how some poor woman can afford the dresses she wears; but we have no right to say that she gets them dishonestly; we have no right even to say that she is extravagant; for perhaps she has friends who send them to her. We have no right to say that a man whose name seldom appears in a subscription list gives nothing away; he may prefer private to public charity.

In all political, moral, and religious controversy it is one of the temptations to which controversialists are incessantly exposed, to draw an inference themselves from the opinions which their opponents hold, and then to charge their opponents with holding the inference; or they declare that, since their opponents approve certain abstract principles, they will therefore certainly commit certain concrete acts which, perhaps, seem to others to be the necessary expression of these principles. Men forget—what I think Archbishop Whateley said—that people are very illogical; and you can never be sure that because some one holds a particular doctrine, he also holds a second doctrine which is perhaps logically the necessary result of the first. Archbishop Whateley adds that men forget that there is very commonly a considerable difference between men's creed and their practice; it does not at all follow that because a Roman Catholic may believe that it is right to persecute heretics, he will, therefore, persecute

them. Our own experience ought to show that we cannot infer a man's conduct from his convictions. It surely does not follow that you never get into a passion because you believe you ought to keep your temper.

But what, perhaps, is more important still—it is very seldom that the members of one Church or of one political party can ever arrive at such a vital knowledge of the convictions of the members of another Church or political party, as to be able to infer with any certainty what conclusions—practical or speculative—will appear to follow from those convictions to the minds of the persons who hold them.

It may seem to us that on the principles of the Roman Catholic Church no Roman Catholic can be loyal to a king who is a heretic; but to conclude that every Roman Catholic must believe it to be his duty to try to destroy the authority of an heretical sovereign, which was the theory of the opponents of Roman Catholic emancipation, and that he will be eager to enter into every conspiracy which promises success, would be unjust; and to declare that every Roman Catholic is by virtue of his faith a traitor, is to bear "false witness" against our neighbour.

From our own principle that the distinction between Church and State should be firmly maintained, there are many who infer that we want to

ignore the authority of Christ in the conduct of our national affairs; but the men who say that this is our desire and intention bear false witness against us.

What we have a right to do is to charge men with the opinions which they actually hold, not with the consequences which we draw from those opinions. We may say that, in our judgment, their principles necessarily involve certain odious conclusions; but if they repudiate these conclusions, we bear "false witness" against them, if we try to make the men odious by declaring that these conclusions of ours are part of their creed.

(3) If we find that with the most honest intentions we are continually making statements about other men which prove to be false, we ought to leave off talking about other men altogether, or, at least, we should take care to say nothing to their disadvantage. Some years ago it was discovered that one man out of every twenty employed on the great English railways was suffering, more or less, from colour-blindness. If the signalman showed a red lamp, they swore with perfect good faith that it was green. It is very singular and rather surprising how many people are affected by this curious imperfection of vision. Clearly, no man who knows that he is suffering from it ought to apply for the situation of engine driver, signalman, or

pointsman. It is equally clear that if we have discovered that we are suffering from some intellectual defect which prevents us from appreciating accurately the words and the doings of our neighbours, we ought never to criticise them. There is a colour-blindness of the intellect for which I believe men are as little responsible as for the inability of many persons to distinguish between the colour of a rose-blossom and the colour of rose-leaves. We may not be responsible for the intellectual defect, but we are responsible if we presumptuously undertake duties for which it disqualifies us.

(4) There is another temptation to false witness to be avoided. We have no right to spread an injurious report merely because somebody brought it to us. It is a crime to pass bad money as well as to coin it. We are bound to consider whether the person, from whom we heard the report, had opportunities of knowing the truth; was likely to form a sound judgment of the facts which came under his knowledge; and whether we should have believed him if he had said the same thing to us about some person to whom we bore no ill-will. There would be very much less scandal manufactured if there were less disposition to circulate it.

We shall have to give account not only of the

deeds done in the body, but of the words which we have spoken, and which are often more significant than actions. Words spoken carelessly, in heat of temper, in envy, jealousy, and malice,—we shall some day know what hopes they have blighted, what evil passions they have provoked, to what sin and to what enduring misery they have given the occasion. Life and death are in the power of the tongue. By our words we wound as with a sword, not the bodies but the spiritual nature of men; by our words we may bind up the broken-hearted, and soothe, and quiet, and charm to peace the bitterest agony of the soul. "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's."—EXODUS xx. 17.

A WELL-KNOWN and popular commentator quotes the following sentence in illustration of the intention of this Commandment: "This is a most excellent moral precept; the observance of which will prevent all public crimes; for he who feels the force of the law that prohibits the inordinate desire of anything that is the property of another, can never make a breach in the peace of Society, by an act of wrong to any of even its feeblest members." That observation is, no doubt, perfectly true; but it rests upon a most superficial theory of the purpose, not only of this particular Commandment, but of the whole Decalogue. It implies that the law against coveting was intended to repress "public crimes,"—that its ultimate purpose was to prevent murder, adultery, and theft, by forbidding men to cherish the evil passions by which they are impelled to commit these external acts.

I have attempted to show that even the Commandments, which prohibit definite acts of crime, had a far higher purpose than the protection of life and property, and are not to be regarded as mere regulations of police. Much less can this law, which touches the unrevealed impulses of the heart, be regarded as nothing more than an additional security against the evil and suffering which certain outward offences inflict on Society. These Commandments occupy a great place in a series of Divine revelations. A moral and spiritual purpose underlies them all. They were given to a particular nation; but they are related to that "Kingdom of Heaven" which our Lord Jesus Christ has established on earth, and for which the whole history of Judaism was a preparation.

I can illustrate my meaning best by referring to certain principles which should control our ordinary national legislation. We shall be in danger of doing infinite mischief if we suppose that the sole or supreme object of national institutions and laws is to prevent, by the most direct means, the external evils from which Society is suffering. In the punishment of crimes and in the alleviation of misery, we have to look beyond the particular offences which the law is intended to repress, and the particular sufferings which remedial measures are intended to diminish. We may do more harm than good, if we do not consider the probable effect

of our policy on the spirit and temper and habits of the nation. It would, no doubt, be possible, by a strong central administration, to remedy many evils which our system of local government leaves untouched. Parish authorities, boards of health, and town councils often show an utter incapacity or an invincible indisposition to make adequate regulations for the health and security of the community. Either through ignorance, or through want of courage to levy a rate, or through petty personal quarrels, they very often leave the work which they are charged to do undone. Towns are badly lighted and badly drained; the water is hardly fit to drink; nuisances and filth, which cause disease and death, are left unpunished; the number of the police is inadequate to prevent crime. The remedy seems simple and obvious. Let these incompetent authorities be swept away. Invest the Home Secretary with power to discharge by well-trained and independent officials all the functions which are now discharged so imperfectly by the representatives of local ignorance, prejudice, and weakness. Under such a system and with a man of genius and courage in the Home Office, the whole aspect of the country might be changed in ten years. Our towns and villages might be made decent, clean, and healthy; every sanitary improvement suggested by men of science might be enforced in every city, town, village, and hamlet

from Northumberland to the Land's End; water from pure mountain springs might be carried into every house; the police might be so increased in number, and their organisation so improved, as to render the detection and punishment of every crime almost certain; and innumerable evils from which we are likely to suffer for a century to come would vanish at once and for ever.

This is the kind of argument relied upon by those who desire to see the infirmities of local government give place to the intelligence and energy of a central administration. The beneficent results which might be expected from the change are probably greatly over-estimated; but, however that may be, there is one consideration which is absolutely ignored. Such a course might, perhaps, produce a wonderful improvement in the outward conditions of life, but what would be its effect on the national spirit and habits? The disappearance of local government would be inevitably followed by a universal indifference to public affairs. No man would feel that he had anything to care for except his own business and pleasure. "In France," said a lady whom I know, writing the other day from Paris to her children in England—"we have noble theories of liberty, but we have not the habits and discipline which are necessary to the possession and maintenance of liberty." These habits are formed, however imperfectly, by

the necessity which is laid upon Englishmen of all ranks and in every part of the country, to care for the public interests; that discipline is gained in contests for local offices and in the administration of local affairs. Local government may fulfil its direct intention very inadequately, but its effect on the spirit and life of the people is so inestimably precious that we cannot afford to surrender it, even in order to secure the greatest material advantages.

I might further illustrate this principle by a reference to our judicial system. Trial by jury is, in many cases, a very uncertain method of getting a true verdict; but perhaps the benefit of obtaining the concurrence of the people in the administration of justice may outweigh the evil of an institution which too frequently permits the guilty to escape punishment. An unpaid magistracy may administer the law less intelligently than professional judges, but it is possible that by investing a large number of country gentlemen. merchants. and manufacturers with judicial responsibilities, certain great social and moral advantages are secured, which would be sacrificed if our legal system were altogether in the hands of lawyers. We might make more complete and satisfactory provision for the treatment of the diseases of the poor by organising hospitals which should be supported by a rate or by grants from the Consoli-

dated Fund, than by leaving these institutions to be founded and sustained by voluntary charity; it is questionable, however, whether such a policy might not so repress the spirit of sympathy and benevolence which finds a thousand means for lessening human suffering that the prosperous would become less generous, and that, as the result of this, the poor would on the whole be less efficiently cared for.

Now if wise human governments always consider not merely the particular purpose which any institution is intended to serve, and not merely the particular crime which any law is intended to repress, but the general effect of its policy on the national character, we may be quite certain that these Commandments were intended to train the higher life of the people as well as to protect the State from mere external evils. These great laws, like the ritual of Judaism and all its civil and political institutions, were meant to cherish a certain national spirit, to develop certain moral ideas, to lead the mind and heart of the people to a living apprehension of certain spiritual truths. This principle, which it is necessary to remember in considering the other Commandments of the Decalogue, should be distinctly present to us in considering the Tenth Commandment, which is in some respects the greatest and most significant of all the Ten.

"Thou shalt not covet." The violations of this law may assume many forms. As it was given in the first instance to a nation, it is natural to consider some of the ways in which a nation may violate it.

The history of the world is stained and darkened by the crimes to which nations have been driven by the spirit of covetousness. A great and prosperous people with a beautiful country rich in all the material resources which contribute to national wealth and splendour, cannot endure that the cornfields, and the vineyards, and the noble river which can be seen from its frontiers should belong to a neighbouring power. Or an inland state with hardly any sea-board looks upon the indented coast of some insignificant and feeble neighbour, and dreams of the formidable navies which could ride in safety in those secure harbours, and of the vast commercial cities which might be built if those convenient sea-ports were its own. Or a strong and masculine and enterprising race speculates on the wealth it might win if it could appropriate by policy or by force rich and fertile territories on the other side of the world, governed by a decaying empire and possessed by an unwarlike and imperfectly civilised people. Sooner or later, it is almost certain that in every case this national covetousness will end in a war of aggression and conquest. Some pretext will be found for a quar-

rel; there will be an insult to avenge; or an ancient wrong to redress, or a frontier to rectify; or the idea of national unity to vindicate; or punishment to inflict and compensation to claim for the violation of a commercial treaty; by some means or other there will be a justification discovered or created for seizing, by force of arms, what the heart of the nation longed for.

But I repeat that it is the covetousness itself which this Commandment forbids; and the covetousness is forbidden not merely to prevent the miseries, and horrors, and crimes of aggressive war, but to train the spirit of nations to the recognition of God's own idea of their relations to each other. If one nation is forbidden to covet what belongs to another, and if it honestly strives to obey the law, it will come to regard all countries as constituting one great and magnificent Confederation of States. For the freer and richer development of the life of humanity it may be necessary that there should exist separate kingdoms and commonwealths, with their separate governments and their peculiar customs and laws; but they are all intended to bear their part in accomplishing the purposes for which the world and man were created. The strong are to use their strength, not to enrich themselves at the expense of the weak, but to defend them from injustice and oppression. Highly civilized nations are not to employ their superior

resources to exterminate barbarous or less civilized races, but to train them to a higher form of social and intellectual life. Countries which happen to possess inferior physical advantages than others, should find in their inferior material wealth the suggestion of the special virtues which they are intended to illustrate, and if they cannot equal other nations in material prosperity should strive to equal or to surpass them in intellectual culture and in a noble temperance and self-restraint.

Nations should see, underlying this Commandment, the Divine idea of the unity of the human race. They exist, not to repress, but to develop and perfect each other's life. They are the separate members of a living and organised body; if one member suffer all the members suffer with it; if one member rejoice all the members rejoice with it. Neither courts of arbitration, nor elaborate treaties guaranteed by all the great powers of Europe, nor the interests of Commerce, nor the sorrowful lessons taught by the sufferings inflicted by great wars, will ever render the peace of the world certain for many years together. Nations must learn that they cannot fulfil their national destiny by increasing their riches and power at the expense of their neighbours; that their true glory lies in frankly accepting and endeavouring with perfect loyalty to fulfil God's own idea, that nations like men are brethren, and that they should seek great-

ness by ministering to each other's peace, security prosperity, and honour.

Individuals, as well as nations, may violate this law. It is violated by the ambition which looks with a restless and hungry heart upon the fame and the power of a successful rival, and longs to secure his greatness for itself. It is violated by the discontent and envy with which we are apt to think of the pleasant homes and the luxurious comfort of men who are wealthier than ourselves. It is violated by the desire to win from another man the love which is the pride and joy of his life It is violated by the evil passion which has appropriated to itself the word "lust," which once had a much wider meaning, a passion which, unless subdued, will lead us to invade the sanctity of marriage, and involve what may be a happy household in misery and disgrace. It is violated by the desire to put ourselves into the place of a fellow-servant who has an easier or more remunerative position than ourselves; if we yield to that desire, instead of crushing it, it will lead us to resort to mean and disgraceful methods of destroying the confidence reposed in him, to base insinuations, to slander, and to treachery.

The wicked and injurious external actions which men commit when the covetous spirit is unchecked we all condemn. When a statesman, coveting the place and power of his rival, subordinates the inter-

ests of his country to his personal aggrandizement, he achieves not glory but infamy. The social disorders and crimes which have come from the violent efforts of the poor to seize the property of the rich are among the saddest and most disgraceful passages in the history of the human race. The trickery and fraud of which men have been guilty in trying to deprive others of their rights, the falsifying of wills, the forging of title deeds, the lying in private, the perjury in courts of justice, are among the basest and most ignoble of crimes. But I must remind you again that it is not these external acts which this Commandment condemns, but the covetousness itself, even when it is checked by conscience or by fear. We are forbidden, not merely to attempt to get for ourselves by illegitimate means what belongs to our neighbour, but even to desire that it should be ours rather than his. The statesman must not wish that the glory of his successful rival were his own; nor we who are poor, that the mansions and parks and libraries of the wealthy were ours. The disappointed lover must not look upon the wife he hoped to win but has lost, and regret that she is not his; nor the servant secretly covet the happier fortune of his master, or the larger income of a man who is higher in place than himself.

It may be said that this is a hard saying, and that it is one of the impossible precepts of which

there are so many in the Old Testament and the New. But what is the moral idea on which it rests? It is only another form of the great commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." If we can obey that law we can obey this. If I love the rich man as I love myself, I shall have no desire to live in his house instead of him, and to drive his carriages, and to enjoy his income. If a statesman loves his rival as well as he loves himself, he will not envy his rival's triumph, and desire his rival's honour; the only motive which will induce him to strive for power will be the conviction that he is better able to serve the State.

Do you say again that this is an impossible precept? I reply that for those whom we love we gladly surrender our personal comfort and ease. Their happiness and prosperity are dearer to us than our own. What father covets his son's wealth? What mother covets her daughter's beauty? A generous-hearted brother rejoices in his brother's success and fame, and would not, if he could, strip him of a single honour in order to increase his own importance and greatness. It affords us more pleasure to see those who are dear to us prosperous than to be prosperous ourselves.

I venture to say that if any man who had himself been senior wrangler had a son who achieved the same honour, he would have greater pride in

his son's success than in his own; and that a prime minister would listen with greater delight to the cheers with which his son was received on entering the House of Commons, after being appointed to a high political office, than to the cheers which he himself received when he first took his seat as leader of the House. We never covet what belongs to those whom we love. This Commandment has its root in the Divine idea of the mutual relations which should exist among mankind. God means us to love our neighbours as we love ourselves.

Yes, this, which is the last of the Commandments, is in some respects the greatest. It is the Commandment which perhaps beyond any of the rest was likely to deepen in the hearts of devout and thoughtful men in the old Jewish times, that sense of their inability to do the will of God, and to fulfil the Divine idea of what human life ought to be, which is indispensable to the surrender of the soul to God, in order to find in Him a supernatural strength.

You remember the great place which this Commandment had in the spiritual history of the Apostle Paul. The other Commandments the Apostle might have thought that he had kept from his youth up. He had never worshipped any God but Jehovah; had never done homage to any representation or symbol of God; nor taken His

name in vain; nor worked on the Sabbath; he had honoured his father and mother; he had never been guilty of murder, adultery, or theft. But when he began to reflect on this law which forbade him to covet that which belonged to his neighbour, he discovered that he had broken it most flagrantly. He was continually coveting what was not his own. The more he struggled against the evil passion which possessed him, the more conscious he became of his inability to master it. His vehement nature refused to submit to the control of his will, and, as the conflict went on, it seemed that his desire to make his own what belonged to another became more and more violent. It was then that he became conscious of sin. Here was a law which came from God and he could not keep it. The righteousness of the law he could not contest. It was invested with the awfulness of Divine authority, before which it was the habit of his nature to bow with unquestioning reverence. His own conscience, perhaps, caught some glimpse of the great moral grounds on which the law rested. But to obey it seemed impossible. He writhed and struggled in vain. He was in the coils of an evil power which he could not escape. He was "sold under sin."

He found freedom in Christ. The Death by which the sins of the world were atoned for, was the most glorious manifestation of the spirit of

perfect love and self-sacrifice. He learnt that to all who trust in Christ for the forgiveness of past sin, there is granted that very life which was in Christ. The Apostle was passionately longing to be redeemed from himself, and in Christ this redemption was possible. He was created anew in Christ Jesus; died with Christ, and with Christ rose again.

The law of self-sacrifice was now written in his heart; and he fulfilled it as few men had ever fulfilled it before, as few men have ever fulfilled it since. Like Christ he looked habitually, not on his own things, but also on the things of others. He checked his desire to die and to be at rest in the presence of Christ from suffering and labour, because his continuance in life was necessary to the Churches which he had founded. He was ready to wish himself "accursed from Christ" for the sake of his kinsmen according to the flesh.

There are people who sometimes tell us that the Christian Faith is but another form of selfishness, that it is perpetually appealing to the dread of suffering, and promising crowns, and thrones, and happiness, and glory as the reward of well-doing. If they can show us any good reason why we should not warn men that sin will certainly be punished, and why we should not try to subdue the false and fading splendours of this world by telling them of the transcendent brightness and

blessedness of the world to come, we shall not refuse to consider what they have to say. But it is possible, as we believe, to paralyse some evil passions by the power of terror, and to give hope and energy to the better instincts and impulses of the soul, by the assurance that the sharpness and severity of present conflicts with temptation will be more than recompensed by the peace, and purity, and rapture of the ultimate triumph. It was God who made us susceptible to hope and to fear; and we have not learnt that any of the original instincts and passions of our nature are common or unclean. But the allegation that Christianity intensifies the selfishness of the human heart is a slander, so wild, so extravagant, so monstrous, that it deserves no reply. The history of the Church is its sufficient confutation.

The very end for which Christ came into the world was to redeem us from selfishness, to reveal to us the infinite love of God and to restore us to God's image. The last of the Ten Commandments, "Thou shalt not covet," touches the characteristic precept of the New Law,—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This perfect love, the spring of all individual virtue, is the only sure and effective remedy for all social and political disorders. It is in the victory of the Christian Faith, and in that alone, that I see any hope for the rescue of mankind from the sorrows, and con-

fusion, and conflicts which make human life so desolate. It is man himself that requires to be changed. No change in the mere external organisation of society will redeem him from the evil passions which are the root of all his miseries. The redemption is to be wrought by the supernatural power of Christ. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore Love is the fulfilling of the Law." These ancient Commandments, written on stone, shall some day be written on the heart of man. God is Love, and when all men are made "partakers of the Divine nature," the Moral Law, as an authoritative restraint on human passion and an external rule of life, will, in a sense, have become obsolete. It will no longer be revealed to us in definite precepts, sanctioned by awful penalties and glorious rewards; it will be revealed in all the instincts, affections, and impulses of the heart. As the Law is the expression of the infinite perfections of God, it is the prophecy of the perfection which we ourselves shall attain when our union with God through Christ is consummated.

THE END.

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